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THE MYSTIC THREE;

SHOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO THREE BOYS WHO BELIEVED ALL THEY READ.

By PIERCE CUTTING.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ROAD.

THE caravan traveled as rapidly as the circumstances permitted for about an hour.

Then they halted, just as the moon rose, beside a little stream; and, while the mare was doing her best to drink the creek dry, took account of stock.

Each had a gun, which had once formed the proudest ornament of the kitchen wall at home. Sim had secured a revolver without a lock, which had belonged to his big brother, who had been to the war; and Gid had a rusty old cutlass suspended to his waist from a belt, in which was also stuck a hatchet.

Pirates, he had heard, always carried hatchets when they boarded their prey.

Hack, in addition to his gun, was armed with a brace of venerable horse-pistols which his great-grandfather had carried in the Revolutionary War, and which, when they went off, made a noise like the explosion of a blast in a coal-mine.

The load strapped to the mare's back consisted of three blankets, a buffalo-robe, a couple of sacks full of bread and meat, and the keg of powder.

It was a small keg, with scarcely enough powder in it to kill a thousand Indians; but it was that much better than none at all.

"The first thing we've got to do," remarked Gid, "is to choose a captain."

"What do we want a captain for?" asked Hack.

"Oh, to sort of put us up to our duty like."

"But we know it as well as he can tell us."

"Well, we've got to have a captain, anyway. Did you ever read of a party like this without one?"

"That's so. How will we choose him?"

"Well, observed Gid, modestly, "I don't want to blow my own horn now."

"Of course not."

"But I think I'd make about as good a captain as you can get."

"Well, I don't."

"Why don't you?"

"Because I don't—that's all."

"I suppose you ain't thinking about yourself now, are you?" sneered Gid.

"Maybe I'm not."

"I guess it's the other way, though."

"Hold on, pardners," interrupted Sim. "Don't get your backs up now. I've got a plan."

"What is it?"

"Let's put it to the vote."

"How?"

"Each of you put a name on a piece of paper and throw it in my hat."

"What for?"

"The one that has two votes is captain."

"That'll do."

And firmly persuaded that one of the others would vote for him, each wrote his own name on a slip of paper, and tossed it into the hat.

The result, of course, was that the affair remained in the same position as before. Then Sim became possessed of another idea.

"The best thing we can do," he said, "is to each be captain."

"What good will that do? We might just as well be privates."

"I mean this way: One be captain to-day, and another to-morrow, and the other next day."

"There is some sense in that."

"Of course there is."

"But who'll be the first captain?"

"We'll draw sticks for that. The longest wins."

"It's a go." Accordingly they drew sticks, and the winning fell to Hack. Gid got the next longest stick, which made him second choice, leaving Sim to bring up the rear.

In virtue of his superior rank, Hank claimed the right to ride.

He had just mounted when Sim uttered an exclamation, and fell on his face in the road.

"Sakes alive! What's the matter?" exclaimed Hack.

"Hist!" responded Sim, in a sepulchral whisper.

"Good gracious, Pug-ly! Are you sick?"

"S-sh!" was the response.

"He must have the cramps," said Gid. "Here, come down from aloft and let him ride."

Before Hack could comply, Sim, who had been laying his ear to the earth after the most approved fashion of an Indian on the war-path, rose.

"There's some one coming," he said.

"How do you know?"

"I hear 'em."

"Nonsense!"

"I tell you I do. It's a wagon."

"Maybe it's some one after us."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"Anyway, we might as well be on the right side," said Hack. "Follow me up the creek."

"But we'll get soaked."

"What of that? You would rather get soaked than caught, wouldn't you?"

"Of course."

"Then come on. Water leaves no trail, you know."

And he urged the mare up the creek, which was shadowed by overgrowing trees, through which

"LOOKING UP, THEY SAW A ROUGH-LOOKING MAN, HOLDING IN HIS HAND A HUGE PITCHFORK."

READ OUR NEW STORIES, THE BEST OUT.

an occasional moonbeam found its way. The others followed in his wake.

The water was waist-deep and ice-cold, and the two pedestrians were soon sick of their bargain, but neither dared give in for fear of being laughed at.

Floundering on, with an occasional stumble on some slimy submerged stone, which resulted in a ducking, they heard the splashing of wagon wheels behind them, as a vehicle was driven rapidly across the creek.

Sim had not been deceived.

When the sound of the wheels died away they halted.

"We might as well go back now," said Sim, with his teeth chattering like dice in a box.

"Yes, let's turn back," replied Gid.

"Halt!" commanded Hack, as they were about to act on this suggestion.

"What for?"

"Who's captain here?"

"You are."

"Then what do you mean by not waiting for orders?"

"Why don't you give the orders, then?"

"That's my business."

"But we want to turn back."

"What is that to me?"

"We're freezing to death."

"Pshaw! You're a pretty pair, you are, to cave in this way. Why don't you brace up like me?"

"We would if we were as dry as you are."

The argument might have continued for an indefinite length of time if the old mare had not taken a hand in it.

That venerable beast had been browsing in a dusty pasture all day, and wanted a bath.

So she lay down and rolled over in the water, almost crushing her rider under her.

By the time he was extricated, Hack was worse wet than his companions, and offered no objections to their commencing a retreat.

"What's that you're carrying there?" demanded Gid, pointing to a good-sized square bundle Sim had slung from his shoulder by a strap, when they came out in the moonlit brightness of the road again.

"That's my books."

"Your books! Do you mean the stories?"

"Yes."

"And what are you lugging all that trash along for?"

"Because I feel like it. Maybe I'm doing the lugging, ain't I?"

"I'm happy to say I'm not."

"That's all about it, then. What have you got in that knapsack?"

And Sim indicated an old army knapsack which Gid wore on his back.

"Oh, only some of my yarns."

"Your yarns?"

"My books, then."

"And what do you mean by talking of my books while you're loaded down with yours?"

"But mine are good ones."

"And what do you call mine?"

"Well, I expect they're good enough, too, messmate," returned Gid, soothingly. "They may come in handy, to be sure; that's what I brought mine for."

"And I thought I'd fetch mine, too," said Hack. "We can always tell what to do out of them if we're cornered, you know."

In point of fact, each of the three had brought twenty pounds or so of dime-novels, with the firm conviction that they would be valuable references in periods of peril, when the exploits of their heroes might suggest ideas of benefit.

Once in the road, they pushed on with only a halt at a chance way-side spring for a drink now and then.

Hour followed hour, and still found them plodding on.

More than once Gid or Sim suggested the advisability of camping, but Hack, who was very comfortable with the mare to carry him, declined to consider the proposition.

At last, when the moon set, and they were passing through a little maple wood, Sim gave up.

"I've done all the walking I intend to do," he said. "I'm going to stop right here."

"Nonsense!" said Hack.

"You wouldn't think it was nonsense if you had walked like us."

"But you can't camp here."

"And I can't walk any further."

"Come as far as the first clearing we find, and I'll stop."

Thus tempted, Sim consented to make an effort, and the gray daylight peeping through the trees ahead of them soon announced that they were nearing the end of the grove.

In a couple of minutes more they emerged into the opening.

A light wagon was standing in the middle of the road, and two men were busy fixing some of the horse's harness, which seemed to have given way, while a third sat in the buggy.

The boys stopped short with an exclamation of consternation.

Even in the dim light of dawn they recognized the man in the wagon as Bulger, the Suckerville constable.

One of the men in the road was Mr. Sands, the coroner, and the other was none other than Mr. Grimes.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SKIRMISH.

AT the sound of our adventurers' approaching, the three men looked around and gave vent to a simultaneous exclamation.

"Well, may I be gormed if it ain't them!" cried Bulger.

"The young villains," squeaked old Grimes.

"The darned little skunks," ejaculated the coroner.

The boys, who had halted in confusion at finding themselves face to face with their enemies, had now recovered themselves.

Hack, in his capacity of captain, took it upon himself to speak.

"Do you apply those tender epithets to us, gentlemen?" he asked, blandly.

"Well, brile me brown!" gasped Bulger. "Only hear the cheek of him."

"Ah!" exclaimed Hack, in well-affected surprise; "can that be you, Mr. Bulger?"

"You'll find out in a minute."

"I'm really glad to see you."

"Maybe you won't be quite so much so soon."

"And how are Mrs. Bulger and the children? Well, I hope."

By this time Mr. Grimes had recovered sufficiently from the amazement this bland impudence had at first thrown him in to speak.

"You young scamp!" he cried. "You horse thieving little vagabone."

"What!" exclaimed Hack; "do my ears deceive my eyesight, or is it Mister Grimes?"

"You'll find out which before you wait to."

"And out at this hour, too, in the chill damp air, sir. Deary me, how rash!"

"Well, I never!"

"You'll catch your death of cold."

"Pon my word, this is the worst I ever hearc."

"Or get the lumbago or something. Do think of your precious health now, sir, and go home before your mother worries to death about you."

This fairly paralyzed Mr. Grimes, and he could only glare feebly at Bulger and gasp.

"That I will," cried the constable.

And leaping from the wagon, he advanced, saying:

"I arrest you three, in the name of the law, for horse stealing."

"Halt!" commanded Hack, sternly.

And he leveled his gun at the constable's head.

"Another step and you'll get your breakfast," he said.

Bulger halted at once.

"By chumps," he said, "I believe the young villain's fool enough to shoot."

"You'll do more than believe it if you move a step. Throw up your hands."

"What do you mean?"

"Put up your hands or you are a gone coon."

The constable evidently considered discretion the better part of valor, for he obeyed, and raised his hands above his head.

At sight of this Mr. Grimes's wrath knew no bounds.

He fairly hopped with fury, and yelled:

"Bulger, are you going to serve that warrant?"

"How can I, sir?"

"You must."

"But I don't dare."

"You must. I tell you."

"But he'll blow my brains out."

"Yah. You're a pretty coward!" screamed the infuriated old gentleman. "I'll serve it myself."

And he was about to approach the constable, when Gid's voice said:

"Halt!"

"I won't!" screamed Mr. Grimes.

"Then you're a dead man."

And the ominous click of a gun being cocked reached the old gentleman's ears.

He was no coward, but there was something in the sound which petrified him where he stood.

"Put up your hands!" commanded Gid.

"I won't!"

"Then you perish."

"You'd better obey, sir," advised Bulger. "Lord save us! but they are a desperate lot, sure."

"They're born murderers!" shouted Mr. Grimes, as he complied. "Where's that coward, Sands?"

"Here, sir," responded the coroner, who had climbed into the wagon and was doing his best to squeeze his portly form under the seat.

"Why don't you come and help us?"

"Because he don't dare," said Sim. "Sit up on that seat."

Mr. Sands complied with an alacrity which would have done credit to a professor of lightning drill, and sat upon the cushioned seat of the buggy, trembling.

"Now, then, put up your hands."

"Oh, murder!"

And Mr. Sands did as he was told.

The boys surveyed this ludicrous group for a minute, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

The two men stood in the road with their hands held high, their heads, while the third squatted in the buggy in a similar position.

Then Hack said:

"So you have got a warrant out for our arrest?"

"Yes, blame it," groaned Bulger. "I wish I'd never laid eyes on it or you."

"Don't be impolite."

"That be blamed."

"Where is that warrant?"

"In my pocket."

"Fetch it out."

Bulger lowered his hand to comply, when Hack shouted:

"Put up your hands!"

The hands went up like a shot again.

"Now, then, hand it out."

Again the constable essayed to obey, when the stern order was repeated.

"Up with your hands, or I'll let daylight through you."

The hands galvanically assumed their former positions.

"Now, then, Mr. Bulger," said Hack, gravely, "how long are you going to be getting that warrant out?"

"But how in blazes can I get it out? You won't let me take my hands down."

"Darn it, that's so! Lower them, then."

Bulger complied, and drew the warrant from his pocket.

"Now, then, tear it in half," commanded Hack.

"But that's contempt of court," gasped Bulger.

"If you don't do it it will be contempt of me."

"If I do it I'll be committed."

"If you don't do it you'll be killed."

"Oh, blast it all!" groaned Bulger; "this is a fearful start."

And he tore the warrant in half.

"Give one half to Mr. Grimes," ordered Hack.

The constable put one half in Mr. Grimes's hand.

"Now, then, gents," said Hack, slowly; "I am going to commence to count. Do you savey?"

"Yes."

"And when I commence to count, you'll commence to eat that warrant."

"What?"

"I'm going to count up to fifty, and if there's a single flourish of it left by the time I finish, you can say your prayers. Now, are you ready?"

"Gracious sakes! I s'pose we must be."

"Of course you must be."

"Then we are."

"All right."

And Hack commenced to count slowly.

As the number one left his lips, Bulger and Mr. Grimes commenced to gobble the warrant like a pair of ducks devouring corn.

They gasped, choked and grew purple, but the paper went down somehow, and by the time Hack reached twenty-five, the last scrap was gone.

"There, that'll do you good," remarked the captain of The Mystic Three. "It's bad to take exercise of a morning on an empty stomach, and lawpapers are good, solid eating."

"I s'pose we may go now."

"There's only one thing more."

"What is that?"

"Mr. Grimes, there, has had the bad taste to insult these gentlemen, who are friends of mine, very grossly."

"How so?"

"By suing out a warrant against them."

"But they stole my mare."

"Stole is a hard word, Mr. Grimes; make it borrowed."

"Well, they forced a loan, then."

"That's better. Now, considering that fact, don't you think you had better tell them you're sorry, and promise not to do it again?"

"Me?"

"Yes, you."

"Apologize for trying to recover my own property?"

"Just so."

"Never! I'll die first."

"Then you'll die by the time I have counted ten." And Hack began.

"One."

"Save us! What a young savage!" gasped Mr. Grimes.

"Two."

"He's a perfect cannibal."

"Three."

"He's fairly hungry for blood."

"Four."

"You'd better give in, sir," admonished Bulger.

"Five."

"Do you really think he'll do it?"

"Six."

"There's cold-blooded murder in his eye."

"Seven."

"Then I cave," shrieked Mr. Grimes. "Gentlemen, I'm sorry. You're welcome to the old mare, and I'll never do it again."

And he made a rush for the buggy in which the trembling Mr. Sands still sat, glued to his seat.

Now the horse attached to the vehicle was a young and spirited one, and, startled by this sudden movement, it tossed its head, uttered a shrill neigh of fright, and started off at a gallop.

The constable and Mr. Grimes set off in pursuit, and the entire party were soon out of sight.

CHAPTER IX.

A GRAND BLOW-UP.

WHEN the last vestige of their discomfited pursuers had vanished, The Mystic Three once more resumed their march.

"Oh, I say, fellows," exclaimed Sim, after they had gone about a mile farther, "ain't it about time we went into camp? I'm getting tireder than a cider-mill dog."

"I thought you'd be the first one to cave in," retorted Hack.

"Who's caved in?"

"You have."

"I'll walk two miles to your one, any day."

"You couldn't tire me out in a week."

"No, I suppose not, if you did nothin' but ride a horse all day. Besides, you promised to camp as soon as we got out of the woods."

"Avast heaving, messmates," said Gid, impatiently. "Let's find a place to come to anchor and get something to eat."

"Why didn't you say so before?"

"Cause the coast wasn't clear."

"Well, I could eat a whole hog," said Sim, hungrily.

"I never thought you were a cannibal," put in Hackaliah.

"I ain't goin' to eat you, anyway."

During this verbal skirmish Gid had led the old mare off the road, and into a small grove near by, and tied her to a tree.

The other two, having finished squabbling, assisted in unloading the cargo, as Gid termed it.

"Now, then," said Gid, "I'll build a fire, while you fellows cruise after some grub."

"And where are we going to get it?" inquired Sim.

"Why, you're a hunter, ain't you?"

"Well, suppose I am?"

"Then, all you've got to do is to bring in some game. Hack can go along with you."

This proposition was not altogether to Sim's taste, but seeing no help for it, he said, resignedly:

"Come along, Hack; I guess we can scare up something."

"Yes, we might scare up a crow," grumbled Hack.

"Well, crow's better than nothing, ain't it?"

"Perhaps it is; I never tried it."

"I don't hanker after it, anyway."

"Stop chinning and get along, then."

"We might rake in a chicken. I see a farmhouse yonder."

"That's so. Let's try it, anyway."

"And that looks like a watermelon patch over there."

"So it does. Gosh! we'll have a regular feast."

"It'll be next year before you get it, then," remarked Gid, "if you don't hurry up."

Spurred by this observation, the two hunters picked up their weapons and started off.

The watermelon patch was reached without difficulty, and several fine specimens of the luscious fruit secured and hidden away in the corner of the fence.

"Now, Hack, for a chicken. We can't make a meal off watermelons."

"That's so."

"Let's creep up toward the farmhouse, and see if we can't scoop something."

"All right; I'm ready if you are."

"You go down this side of the field and I'll take the other; if you get anything, creep back here and I'll do the same."

"Go ahead, then."

Accordingly, both started at the same moment.

Sim had the longest way to go, and after crawling through a big cornfield, found himself at the back of a large barn.

As he crept cautiously along, looking for some means of entrance to the barnyard, his ears were assailed by an astonishing medley of sounds proceeding from the other side of the building.

The cackling of chickens, the hissing of enraged geese, and a babel of shouts and screams, mingled with the furious barking of a dog.

Reaching the corner of the building, he peered around it.

This is what he saw.

In the centre of a large poultry yard was a good-sized pool of stagnant water, half covered with a green scum.

In the middle of this pool, and struggling with all his might to escape from the perils that beset him, was the unfortunate Hackalah.

One hand grasped by the neck a full-grown goose, that was flapping its wings like a windmill in a hurricane.

The other was busily employed in endeavoring to ward off the blows showered upon him with a broomstick by the infuriated mistress of the farm.

On the margin of the pool was poised a gaunt old gander, hissing shrill defiance at Hackalah, and stretching his long neck to the utmost to peck at that unlucky youth. A ferocious-looking bulldog was straining his chain to its fullest tension in his endeavor to escape from his kennel, and filling the air with howls of rage.

Chickens, geese and turkeys were running in every direction, and adding to the tumult by their cackling, hissing and gobbling.

Just as Sim was about to take to his heels an audacious rooster ran around the corner of the barn.

Sim grabbed him instantly, and put out for camp as fast as his legs would carry him.

At the same instant Hack emerged from the duck-pond, dripping with green slime, and still clutching the goose, bolted over the fence, just escaping a vicious blow from the broomstick.

It was out of the frying-pan into the fire.

As he leaped the fence he upset a beehive, a number of which were ranged along on the other side.

The angry insects attacked him in a swarm.

"Oh, Lord!" he howled, as he dashed furiously across the kitchen-garden. "Ouch! murder! Drive 'em away, somebody."

His exclamation had no effect, unless it was to make the bees sting him faster.

They pursued him nearly all the way to the camp, where he arrived breathless, hatless, and with his clothes half torn off by scrambling over fences, while his face looked as if he had just broken out with the smallpox.

Sim was sitting calmly before the fire, plucking the feathers from the venerable rooster he had captured, while Gid was swallowing a watermelon at a rate that bid fair to result in a first-class attack of colic.

"Oh, you've got back, have you?" said Sim.

"What's left of me has."

"What made you stay so long?"

"Oh, nothing. Don't I look as if I only stopped for fun?"

"You certainly look as if you'd had it. But did you get anything else?"

"Did I get anything? Great snakes! just look at me."

"Thank you for the favor."

"You must be a chuckle-headed idiot to ask such a question."

"What did you get, then?"

"Got nearly stung to death and half drowned, and banged over the head with a club till I'm nearly a foot shorter than I was."

"Is that all?"

"All! I should think it was enough, and a darned sight too much. If you'd been any good at all you wouldn't have sneaked off and left me in such a darned hole."

"Who sneaked off?"

"Why, you did."

"I don't know what you call sneaking off."

"Oh, you don't?"

"Not any."

"Do you mean to say you didn't leave me in the lurch?"

"No, I left you in the duck-pond."

"Why didn't you help me out, then?"

"I was just going to when this big rooster came out and bit me."

"That rooster bit you?"

"Yes, sir, he did."

"What did you do then?"

"I arrested him."

"Stole him, you mean."

"I'd scorn the action."

"Yes, I s'pose you would."

"Of course I would. I'm not a road-agent."

"Oh, stop your everlasting squabbling," interposed Gid, with his mouth full of watermelon. "Go get some water, Hack; there's a spring down there in the hollow, and Sim can be cooking the chicken while you're gone."

"And what'll you do?"

"I'll finish the watermelon."

"Pears to me you don't do nothing but eat."

"I believe I'm captain to-day, and the captain always eats first."

"Oh, he does, does he?"

"Yes, sir; that's always the way on board a ship."

"Well, you ain't aboard ship now."

"Never you mind; you do as I tell you, unless you want to raise a mutiny."

"Hurry up, Hack," added Sim, who had by this time spitted the carcass of the rooster on a ramrod, and was roasting, or, rather, burning it, over the fire; "this chicken will be done in a very few minutes."

"Well, if I must I must," replied Hack.

And taking a battered tin can, he started off toward the spring.

He had scarcely reached it, when he turned around excitedly and yelled for them to come to him quick.

Sim dropped his chicken, Gid threw down the remains of the watermelon, and both ran down the slope to where he was standing.

Then they saw the cause of his excitement.

He had discovered a big snapping turtle close by the spring.

"Get a stick," exclaimed Hack, excitedly. "I'll watch him. We can catch him, sure."

Gid ran in one direction and Sim in another, in search of the desired weapon.

Before either had time to secure one, a strange, crashing noise reached their ears, and at the same time attracted Hack's attention from the turtle.

All three looked in the direction of the camp, and simultaneously uttered a cry of alarm.

The dry grass had caught from the camp-fire, and a whirlwind of flame was sweeping over the very spot where all their outfit was piled up.

They started to run back, when the same thought came into the mind of each, and they paused and stood in speechless consternation.

They had remembered the keg of powder.

All passed so rapidly that not more than two minutes had elapsed after the discovery of the fire before, with a terrific explosion, the contents of the camp were scattered all over the county.

They saw the old mare disappear in a cloud of smoke, while the air rained tin cans, fragments of guns, knives, hatchets and a choice stock of selected literature.

As they stood paralyzed by this unlooked-for disaster, something descended from the air and struck Sim bang on the head.

It was the larger half of Gid's cutlass.

Sim was knocked off his feet, but in falling grabbed both his comrades.

All three tumbled in a heap into the spring, and were still struggling to extricate themselves when a hoarse voice cried:

"What in thunder is the matter, any way? Has an airthquake broke loose?"

Looking up, they saw a rough-looking man, holding in his hand a huge pitchfork.

It was the farmer whose poultry-yard they had raided.

CHAPTER X.

FARMER BINKS'S BIRTHDAY.

If the boys were amazed at the sudden appearance of the farmer, the latter was no less surprised at the aspect they presented.

As the reader has already discovered, The Mystic Three had very different ideas of the romance of life.

Gid, for instance, admired and desired to emulate the buccaneers, whose gory exploits had become familiar to him from many a thrilling yarn bound in yellow paper.

Consequently, he had shaped his attire to meet the requirements of the part he aspired to.

And in his own mind, at least, he was the perfect model of a pirate of the Spanish Main.

He wore a blue flannel shirt, with a falling collar, a rough pea-jacket, pretty much all pockets, dirty white duck pants, and a tarpaulin hat which had been the property of some fisherman at Forgytown, the nearest seaport to Sacherville.

A broad belt of rawhide of his own manufacture encircled his waist, and supported the death-dealing weapons with which he had provided himself.

Hack's pet ambition was to be one of those modern highwaymen whom we know by the name of road-agents.

His costume consisted of a red shirt, very tight pants stuffed into boots which reached up to his hips, and a broad-brimmed felt hat, so big that he had to keep the crown filled with paper to keep it from extinguishing him.

A peacock's plume was stuck jauntily into this improvised sombrero.

Attached to the boots were a brace of enormous rusty iron spurs, so big that they were continually entangling themselves and tripping him up.

A plaid shawl, cribbed from his sister, made a sash in which he carried his historical horse-pistols, and he carried a broken riding-whip to lend him additional dignity.

Simeon Walsingham Pugsley, however, possessed a raiment which, to use his own expression, "just carried the cake."

It certainly would have formed a feature in a museum.

Sim, by nature, was a chubby, round-faced, innocent-looking boy of fifteen, quite big for his age, with hay-colored hair, and eyes as mild as those of a dead codfish.

His headgear consisted of a species of bag, made by himself out of rabbit skins, with the end of an old bear-skin boa of his mother's fastened to it by way of a tail.

Trappers always wore tails to their caps in the stories he had read, and he was bound to be in the fashion.

Being unable to secure a buckskin suit, he had scraped the hair from an old buffalo-robe, and persuaded his cousin, Molly, to make a coat, or rather hunting-shirt, of it for him.

As Molly was not intimately conversant with the costume of the plains, she had made the shirt look more like a baby's bib than anything else, but it suited Sim, as it was not like anything else he had ever seen, or anybody else, either.

The edges of this garment were ornamented with gimp fringes embezzled from the parlor curtains.

When the farmer had sufficiently recovered from his surprise, at sight of this extraordinary trio, to speak, he exclaimed:

"Well, shoot me if it ain't the show-actors!"

"The show-actors!" repeated Gid, in his capacity of captain for the day. "What show-actors?"

"Oh, I know yer," said the farmer, grinning from ear to ear till he seemed about to swallow all three and himself into the bargain. "Ye needn't try to choose me. I'm up to roots, I am."

"Are you, now?"

"You bet your boots. "I've hearn tell on you fellers before."

"You don't say so?"

"And I'm a-goin' to see you if I bust a blood-vessel."

"You see us now, don't you?"

"But I mean at the show."

"What show?"

"Oh, come now. Don't throw off on me that a-way. I tell you I know all about it."

"You seem to know more than we do, anyway."

"Well, maybe I do."

And the farmer tapped his nose with his forefinger and leered cunningly.

"I seen your show-bills onto the walls when I was up to Tunkapank yesterday," he said. "The Great Celestial Calisthenic Combination, an' all that. I tell you it's a high old racket. Now look here."

"Look where?"

"Right here."

"Well, we're looking."

"I never was to a circus show in my life."

"Indeed!"

"No, never."

"What beastly ignorance!"

"I know it is; but I was brought up humble-like, an' never had the chance."

"I'm sorry for you."

"I knowed you would be. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do."

"Tell away."

"You're a-goin' up to Tunkapank for the show."

"Well, suppose we are?"

"But you don't need to git there afore to-morrer."

"Don't we, though?"

"Because the show don't open till then."

"Allow it don't, then. What next?"

"Why, this."

And the farmer dealt Gid a blow on the shoulder so hearty that it nearly knocked him down.

"I like you circus fellows," he said.

"I'm glad to hear it."

"An' I wish you'd come up to my house an' stop there to-night."

"What for?"

"Oh, for nothin'. I won't charge you a cent. You kin give me a free pass for the show for me an' my old woman, an' we'll call it square."

By this time the truth had dawned on The Mystic Three.

The farmer, misled by their outlandish dress, believed them part of a circus company, which was to perform at some adjacent town the next night.

"What shall we do?" asked Gid.

"Why, take his offer up," replied Sim, promptly. "And stop here!"

"Cert. No one will think of looking for us at his house."

"That's so."

"And we'll get a good rest."

"You're always thinking of that," said Hack, sarcastically.

"Well, you will be, too, soon, now that you haven't got a horse to carry you."

This remark seemed to be a convincing one.

Hack, now that he had no other prospect than that of walking, was by no means so anxious to push on as he had been, so he signified his willingness to accept the proffered hospitality.

The farmer, who had been watching their colloquy curiously, now asked:

"Well, are you agreed?"

"We are," was the unanimous reply.

"Then come along to the house."

"We've got to gather our things together first."

"Gather ahead, then. But, I say."

"What?"

"What was that there eternal noise just now?"

"Oh, nothing," responded Gid. "Only a blow-up."

"What blowed up?"

For a minute Gid hesitated.

Then a ready lie flashed into his head, and he said:

"Well, the fact of the matter is, we were bringing a lot of oil along with us to light the show up with."

"Yes?"

"And it blew up."

"And killed your boss?"

"Deader than nails."

And by way of confirmation Gid pointed to the carcass of the old mare, which reposed not far off, in a much mangled state.

This set the story was, the farmer swallowed it without question.

Like most country folks, he had a great admiration for circus-people and play-actors, and he was ready to believe anything they told him.

"Only hurry up," he said; "I want to git you home in time for dinner, and the old woman will kick it we're late."

The boys, thus adjured, lost no time in gathering what the explosion had left of their effects.

These consisted of a few of their books and the guns, which had been left at a distance from the fire, and had escaped uninjured.

"What's them?" demanded the farmer, suspiciously, when they joined him with their firearms.

"What's what?" demanded Gid.

"What's which?" inquired Sim.

"What's who?" asked Hack.

"Why, them."

And the farmer pointed to the guns.

"Sakes alive, man! what do you s'pose they are? Gold watches?"

"No."

"Or diamond rings?"

"Not much. I kin see they're guns."

"What do you ask such a question for, then?"

"But why do you carry 'em?"

"Because we never travel without 'em."

"But what do you do with 'em?"

"Kill things."

"Kill what?"

"Oh, anything."

The farmer shook his head suspiciously.

There was something about the armament of The Mystic Three he did not like.

Still they were, show people, and as he said to himself, "show people are a queer lot."

So after after a moment's hesitation he asked the boys to follow him, and started in the direction of the very farm upon which his guests had foraged an hour before.

"My name's Binks," he said—"Jedediah Binks."

"And a very good name it is," remarked Gid, encouragingly. "Mine's Goble—Gid Goble."

"And mine's Snick—Hackaliah Snick."

"And mine's Pugsley—Simeon Walsingham Pugsley."

"Called Puggy, the Crank, for short," said both the others, together.

"Puggy, the Crank!" muttered the farmer. "Wot a name! Well, bile my turnips, but these here circus folks is a rum lot!"

CHAPTER XI.

A FAMILY JAR.

THE farmhouse was soon reached. Hack, who recognized the scene of his late exploit with no little trepidation, was by no means easy in his mind

But he was ashamed to back out in the presence of his comrades, and, besides, the fact that the owner of the farm was their conductor was a sort of guarantee of safety.

As they approached the house an elderly female, who looked as if she subsisted chiefly off of pickles and aquafortis, appeared at the porch.

Hackaliah Snick felt his heart crawling into his toes as he recognized her.

The recognition was evidently a mutual one.

At sight of the party the woman's face lighted up into an expression of vixenish satisfaction, and she exclaimed:

"So you caught 'em, did you, Jed Binks?"

"Caught who?" demanded Farmer Binks.

"Why, them young scallywags you went after."

"Darn it all! what are you talking about?"

The woman raised her hands heavenward with an expression of disgust.

"Well, I never!" she said.

"Never what?" asked the farmer.

"See a man like you."

"What's the matter with me?"

"Oh, nothing."

"Then, what are you gassing about?"

"About your darned chuckle-headedness."

"I'll thank you to explain what you mean, Mrs. Binks."

"Then I will."

"Explain ahead then."

"Didn't a blamed young robber come into our yard this morning and steal a goose?"

"By gum! I remember now."

"Did Gid Pryor go to fetch him?"

"Well, well, so I did; and I forgot all about it. I met these here gentlemen, you see——"

"What gentlemen?"

"These."

"Gentlemen! gentlemen!" screamed Mrs. Binks; "why, that there one in the red shirt's the one that stole the goose."

"I knew it," growled Hack.

"Knew what?" demanded his friends.

"That she'd recognize me."

"Well, what of that? Can't you lie it out?"

"I might."

"It's for our dinner, you know."

"Oh, don't I?"

And Hack pressed his empty stomach with a sigh as deep as an artesian well.

"Mrs. Binks," demanded the farmer, "are you crazy?"

"Crazy, Jed Binks?"

"Yes, crazy."

"You must be spoiling for a fight, old man," said Mrs. Binks, beginning to get red.

"Why so, pray?"

"You wouldn't talk that way to me if you wasn't."

"I'm talkin' sense."

"It's the first time I ever heard you do it."

"And I don't want my friends to be insulted."

"Oh, and we are your friends?"

"These gentlemen here."

"These goose-thieves, you mean."

"They ain't goose-thieves."

"What are they, then?"

"Show folks."

"Yes, and a pretty show they are."

"And they've come to stop till to-morrow."

"Where?"

"Here."

"In this house?"

"Yes."

"Well, I guess not."

And Mrs. Binks planted herself in front of the door.

"Now, then," she said, "I want to see them pass here, that's all, the robbers."

Now, Jedediah Binks feared his wife as he feared a rattlesnake.

But the presence of his guests made him ashamed of himself, and he put a bold front to matters.

"The old lady ain't well to day," he explained.

"She's well enough to lick you and your tramp friends," interjected Mrs. Binks.

"So you'll have to excuse her."

"No, they won't. She don't want to be excused."

"She don't mean half she says," said the farmer, apologetically.

"She means every word, and more, too."

"And she wouldn't hurt a fly."

"But she would a cussed fool."

And snatching the dasher from a churn which stood on the porch, Mrs. Binks made a dash for her spouse.

The latter dodged her, and Gid knocked the dasher from her hands.

Fully persuaded that it was her husband who had done this, Mrs. Binks pounced upon him with her bare hands.

Seizing him by the ears, she pounded his head against the side of the house, shrieking:

"You lunk! I'll show you, I will!"

"Let go!" howled the farmer.

"I'll let go when I get ready."

"Hold on."

"I intend to."

"Jerusalem crickets! She's bustin' my skull to pieces."

"No fear, you loon. It's too soft."

All this time Mrs. Binks was banging her spouse's head against the door-jamb without cessation.

Each blow sounded like the assault of a battering-ram.

The noise was indescribable.

The woman shrieked, her victim howled, the boys shouted with laughter, the big dog bayed, and every fowl in the farmyard gobbled, quacked or cluttered, according to its gifts.

Suddenly Mr. Binks made a jerk to free himself.

The effort was unsuccessful, but he got as far as the churn, and his wife, now wild with wrath, jammed his head down into it.

It fitted him like a cap, and he staggered about blindly, deluged with buttermilk and smashing all the windows opening on the porch as he tumbled against them.

Leaving him to himself, Mrs. Binks made a rush for the dog-kennel.

"Clear, you tramps," she screamed. "Clear, or I'll loose the dog on you."

And she unchained that animal, whom the excitement of the fight it had witnessed had rendered as frantic as herself.

The Mystic Three did not await further developments.

They bolted around the house at the top of their speed.

The door of the barn stood invitingly open, and they dashed in and banged it to just in time to catch the dog's head between it and the jamb.

The animal howled like mad, and struggled fiercely, but to no purpose.

The boys pressed against the door, and held him there till they judged him exhausted.

Then they relaxed the pressure, and Sim dealt him a tremendous kick under the jaw.

The beast rolled over and over till he brought up against Mrs. Binks, who had started in pursuit of the fugitives.

Rage had blinded him, and he fastened on his mistress as fiercely as he would on a stranger.

His jaws closed on her skirts and held there, and she started for the house, dragging him after her and screaming for help.

The Mystic Three meanwhile had barred the barn-door, and began to review the situation.

"Now we are fixed," observed Gid. "Locked up in a barn and starving for something to eat."

"Well, we needn't die of hunger, anyway," said Sim.

And he pointed to a heap of apples in a corner.

They began to demolish these at once while they held a council.

"What can we do now?" asked Hack.

"Eat our fill first," responded Gid.

"But we'll be caught at it."

"No fear. They can't get in here, can they?"

"But we can't stay here for ever."

"We can stop till the coast is clear, anyhow; so let's take it easy."

After gorging themselves with apples they stretched out on the straw, and a couple of hours slipped by.

Then a timid rap sounded at the door.

Reconnoitring through a crack they found the knocker to be farmer Binks, and admitted him.

He had a huge piece of cold meat and a home-made loaf, and looked as dilapidated as if he had been playing with an elephant in a tin-yard.

"It's the best I could do, gents," he said, setting the food before them. "Lay into it."

The boys needed no second invitation, and while they ate he continued:

"You must excuse the old woman."

"Certainly," said all three. "Don't mention her."

"She was only a little out of sorts."

"I'm glad she wasn't a great deal out of sorts," observed Gid. "Is she often taken this way?"

"Oh, no. She was a little riled, that's all."

"About us?"

"She swears you stole a goose, but, of course, that's a mistake."

"To be sure it is."

"You wouldn't steal a goose."

"We wouldn't steal anything, except a red-hot stove, maybe."

"That's what I said. But she sticks to it."

"How obstinate of her!"

"So perhaps it will be better if you sleep here to night, instead of at the house."

"All right."

"I'll bring you some supper. And now will you write me that there pass to the show?"

"Certainly."

"Here's a pencil and some paper."

Gid took the proffered articles and wrote:

"Pass bearer and friends to the best seats you have, and charge the same to I. O. U."

The farmer took this mystical document with much respect and withdrew.

He was good as his word, and at sunset brought in a rude but plentiful supper.

Having put it where no rats could profit by it, The Mystic Three rolled over on the fragrant hay to sleep the untroubled sleep of the righteous.

CHAPTER XII.

HEROISM AT A DISCOUNT.

AFTER a refreshing sleep in Farmer Binks's barn, The Mystic Three awoke at dawn, breakfasted on apples, and resumed their journey before even the dog was awake.

Their route led them toward the town of Tunkapank.

They had no particular reason for traveling in that direction, as it was certainly out of their line of route, save the very cogent one that the circus was to show there that night.

"And I'll see that circus," said Hack, "if it costs me a leg."

"Farmer Binks will, too," remarked Sim, with a grin.

"Of course; that pass you gave him was a bang-up one."

"I'm afraid he'll be banged-up in his coffin before he goes into any show on that."

"I'd like to have a life-size photograph of him," observed Gid, "when the doorkeeper sees that scrap of paper."

"I wouldn't."

"Why?"

"Because he might see me."

"And what then?"

"It strikes me——"

"Yes."

"With the force of a spile-driver——"

"Yes."

"That the laugh would be on the other side of the face, that's all."

"Well, he won't see you."

"You can wager your saccharine existence he won't, if I can help it."

"Don't stand chattering all day," said Gid, impatiently. "You'd better do more walking and less chinning."

"I believe I'm boss of this excursion to-day, Mr. Goble," retorted Sim, sarcastically.

"Well, suppose you are?"

"Then, I'll give the orders."

"Why don't you give 'em, then?"

"I will."

"When?"

"When I get good and ready."

"Well, can't you get ready soon, now?"

"I might, if I tried hard."

"I'll help you, if it makes you too tired."

"You're too good. I wouldn't trouble you for the world. Leave me to boss this day's job now, and git along and hold your gab."

And they started ahead again, and plodded away pretty steadily for three or four miles.

"If it hadn't been for your darned stupidity," broke out Sim, suddenly, as they were climbing a steep hill, "I'd been riding the old mare now."

"How do you make that out, Puggy?"

"Captain Pugsley, if you please."

"Well, you have got a cheek."

"You'll have a whole head put on you in a minute if you call me Puggy again."

"But, I say, Pug——"

"Shut up, I tell you."

"Well, don't call me stupid, then."

"I can't call you anything else."

"Why can't you?"

"Because you are stupid, anyway."

"How am I?"

"It's all your fault that we got blown up."

"And that's the reason you're blowing me up now?"

"It is."

"Why, I didn't have nothing to do with it."

"Oh, no, certainly not; you didn't holler for us to help you catch that darned old turtle, did you?"

"Suppose I did?"

"Well, if we hadn't run to help you, we wouldn't have been blown up, that's all."

"I'll be blown up if I can see why."

"Why, the fire wouldn't have spread, and of course there wouldn't have been any bust up."

"What's the use of growling about it now?" interrupted Gid, impatiently. "It's done and can't be helped. Hulloo! what's that coming?"

By this time they had crossed the crest of the hill, and the road stretched before them in a long, level sweep, almost perfectly straight.

The object approaching was a horse on a dead run.

The rider was a young and rather pretty girl, who seemed, to their excited imagination, to be striving to rein in the frantic beast.

"By gosh, it's a runaway!" exclaimed Sim, excitedly.

"Tell us something we don't know."

"And that gal will get killed, as sure as snakes."

"Do you call that news?"

"We must save her, fellers," cried Hack, importantly.

"Yes, but who's going to do it?"

"You try it, Sim," said Gid. "You're the most used to horses, you know."

"Seems to me it's more in Hack's line," responded Sim, doubtfully. "Riding's his best hold."

"I'll try it, if you'll help."

"All right; here she comes."

As he spoke, the horse came dashing up the road at a tearing pace.

There was no time to be lost.

Sim and Hack placed themselves at each side of the track to endeavor to catch him by the bridle.

Gid "stood by" with the intention of seizing the fiery steed by the tail, and "bringing him to anchor," as he expressed it.

The result was not exactly what they had anticipated.

As the horse dashed by they sprang simultaneously upon him.

Hackaliah and Sim grabbed at the bridle, and succeeded in seizing it, only to be dragged for a few paces, knocked down, trampled on, and left rolling over and over in the road.

Gid Goble was even less fortunate.

He got a firm hold on the tail, and found himself for a moment jerked through the air, as if he were on the end of a whiplash.

Then the horse lifted his business end, and Gid soared skyward like an erratic comet. He turned a couple of somersaults, and shot over the fence into the adjoining field; where he landed in the soft grass in the immediate neighborhood of a vicious bull, who was quietly grazing.

It is hard to tell which was the most astonished—Gid or the bull.

The first saw more stars than were ever heard of in the astronomy, and the latter looked up to see if any more boys were coming tumbling from the skies.

Gid was the first to recover himself, and made tracks for the fence.

The bull uttered a loud bellow, and charged his retreating figure.

Gid was spry, but the bull was spryer, and the former had just grasped the top rail when the bull hoisted him over the fence like a sky-rocket.

Fortunately, he fell in the ditch, and escaped without further injury than a few more rents in his already tattered clothes.

As he picked himself up Sim and Hack also scrambled to their feet, and all three were confronted by the lady, who had turned her horse and rode up to them.

"What's the matter with you idiots?" she said, angrily. "Are you crazy?"

"Not exactly," replied Sim, who felt called upon to act as spokesman.

"What do you mean, then, by rushing at my horse in that way, and nearly frightening me to death?"

"We were trying to save you."

"Trying to what?"

"To save you."

"Trying to break my neck, you mean. From what?"

"From being run away with."

The young lady stared at them for a minute, and then broke into a clear, ringing laugh.

"Do you mean to say you thought my horse was running away?"

"Certainly. Wasn't he?"

"Certainly not."

He looked mighty like it, then."

"Well, you are a jolly green lot, and no mistake; you're certainly the queerest-looking specimens I've seen in this wooden county, and that's saying a good deal. What are you doing here?"

"We're traveling."

"To some insane asylum, I hope, for the good of people who ride horses. Where are you going to?"

"We ain't decided yet."

"Indeed. What are you traveling for, then?"

"For our health."

"One of you look as if he'd improved his," said the lady, who began to get angry, pointing to Gid, who certainly presented a rather damaged appearance. "I've a good mind to thrash all three of you."

"Don't trouble yourself, ma'am. We'll try to get along without it."

"I think you'd better have some, anyhow. It will do you good."

And urging her horse forward, she raised the light riding-whip she carried, and began dealing lashes out to them in liberal doses.

The boys were so taken by surprise that they could offer no resistance, and the blows fell fast and furious upon the shoulders of the three heroes.

At length they recovered sufficient presence of mind to scatter.

Their fair persecutor, seeing that pursuit was impossible, wheeled her horse and galloped off down the road, laughing heartily at the ludicrous termination of her adventure.

"Laugh ahead," apostrophized Hack, shaking his fist after her. "Darn you, you may want to be rescued some day, and then I won't do it."

"I'll see you further first," added Gid.

"Yes," said Sim; "you or any other woman with a horse under her."

[To be continued.]

"The Mystic Three" was commenced in No. 671.

PLANT ANIMALS—THE SPONGE.

UNDER a surface much less varied than that of the main land, remarks Humboldt, the sea contains in its bosom an exuberance of life of which no other region of the globe affords any idea. Charles Darwin, in his valuable and interesting "Journal of a Naturalist," justly observes that our terrestrial forests do not afford an asylum to nearly so many animals as do those of the ocean. For the sea has likewise its forests, consisting of the long marine herbs which flourish in shoal and shallow, or the floating banks of fucus which the waves and currents have detached, and whose loose and slender branches are raised to the surface by their air-swollen cellules. Consisting, moreover, of those lythophytes, those arborescent madrepores which embrace immense areas both in height and breadth, and whose encroachments would become formidable were it not for the extreme slowness with which the polypes accomplish their indestructible work. Let us consider a while some few of those *animated plants* which have long perplexed and embarrassed our scientific classificators; embarrassed them not unreasonably, nor are they yet free from trouble, only the trouble has changed its direction—for to-day our naturalists, having recognised as animals the strange, half-formed beings which they formerly took for plants, have begun to ask if those other so-called plants may not also be animals, or at least polypes; whether, in a word, the whole vegetable kingdom is not a fiction!

PLANT ANIMALS.—THE SPONGE.

Of all the zoophytes, the sponges are perhaps those whose exact place, in the series of being, it has been difficult to determine. The ancient writers never doubted but that they were animals, and even accorded to them a more exalted rank than their organization deserves. Thus Pliny and Dioscrides have distinguished them into male and female sponges, and they affirmed that they were endowed with voluntary motions, that they attached themselves to rocks with a force which was wholly their own, and that they escaped from your grasp if you attempted to seize them.

In modern times, on the other hand, and down to our own era, sponges were rather looked upon in the light of vegetables. Linneus himself had adopted this opinion, in the first editions of the "System of Nature." But we have recently returned to the hypothesis of the ancients, modified, nevertheless, in this direction, that we deny to them sex, and locomotion except in their younger age; that we recognize in them, at the most, in their adult state, a very limited sensibility and contractility; and that, while admitting them into the animal kingdom, we only assign them, and as by favor, the lowest place.

Their mode of reproduction is believed to be oviparous. At certain periods of the year, according to Grant's observations, small spheroidal bodies are developed in the interior of the sponges, drop into the iscuna with which they are pierced, and are expelled along with the water, which pours through them. These corpuscles—the reproductive germs of the sponges—are accordingly armed with hairs or filaments, by means of which they move in the water with tolerable rapidity, and succeed in fixing themselves upon some object, whence they do not stir. Ordinarily, they choose in preference the rocks and calcareous stones, and even excavate a kind of lodging, which at first serves them for an asylum, and then insures them, while expanding, a more solid support.

It is their chemical composition, in which azote—a characteristic element of animal matter—plays an important part, that has obtained them their certificate of naturalization in the animal kingdom. Burn a bit of sponge, and you will perceive an odor like that of burnt horn or wool. Their substance is thus a species of flesh, disposed in very tense fibres, more or less elastic, intertwined so as to form an elastic tissue, traversed by a multitude of channels of variable diameter, which ramify inextricably, and sustained by their spikes and filaments, partly of horn and partly silicious and calcareous, which resemble the bones and cartilage of a zoophyte. The sponge, while living, is impregnated with a gluey and gelatinous matter. Chemists have even abstracted from it a peculiar fatty matter, which, on being analyzed, yields carbon, hydrogen, azote, iodine, sulphur, phosphorus, and somewhat larger quantities of phosphate, carbonate, and sulphate of lime, marine salt, silica, magnesia, alumina, and sulphate of iron.

Sponges are found in all latitudes, sometimes at considerable depths, sometimes more or less near the surface, or even clinging to rocks which are alternately abandoned and covered by the waves. According to their species, they affect very diverse forms, as those of tubes, vases, globes, bunches, fans, etc., and these forms are often very irregular. Their color is yellowish-white, or a brown red, and by no means agreeable to the eye.

Nutrition and respiration are functions one and the same function, which they accomplish by absorbing the aerated water. Their growth is derived from the augmentation of the gluttinous parenchyma, in which are deposited the elements of their osseous framework. The parts not absorbed are drawn out of these oscules, or channels, by the movement of the waters. But if our naturalists have succeeded in ascertaining how sponges are reproduced and nourished, how they breathe and how they grow, they cannot tell us how they die. Probably by ossification or petrifaction, by the encroachment of the mineral elements in the spongiary tissue, and by their final substitution for the totality of that tissue.

It is at least in this way we may be permitted to endow with existence the silicious and calcareous sponges which have been taken for distinct species of the horny sponge, of which they can only be the carcasses. Otherwise, I would ask the naturalist to what kind of death nature condemns sponges; they must die in some fashion or other, or we must again expel them from the animal kingdom, into which they have been admitted with so much difficulty.

THE LITTLE SOMNAMBULIST OF LEAVENWORTH WHO WALKED OUT OF THE WINDOW IN HER SLEEP.

THE LITTLE SOMNAMBULIST.

ONE morning about two o'clock Mr. George Chase, residing at the corner of West Seventh and Olive Streets, in Leavenworth, Kansas, was awakened by a shrill, plaintive cry, as if some little child were in pain. Supposing it to be one of his own children, who were sleeping in the room above, he arose and passed out into a porch which separates his sleeping apartment from that of his little ones. As he stepped upon the porch he descried, in the inky darkness, a little, white-robed figure, which at times uttered cries, as if in pain. He approached the child, took it up into his arms and carried it into the house. His surprise may be better imagined than described when he ascertained the little one to be Gertie Spear, the eleven-year-old daughter of a neighbor residing across the street.

Inquiries elicited the fact that she supposed she was being pursued by somebody anxious to kill her, and to escape she opened the window and the shutters outside and jumped out. She then ran over to Mr. Chase's for protection. The distance from the window of her sleeping-apartment to the ground is fully fifteen feet, and although she alighted upon a hard board sidewalk, and had nothing on save her night-clothes, she sustained very few bruises; one of her feet being found much discolored and bruised, and a few other slight injuries upon her body. Her mother, when notified of the fact, could not believe the child was not in bed until she went up-stairs and looked. She explained, as far as she knew, that little Gertie had not felt well the day before, and when at school she asked the teacher to let her go home, which request was not complied with; that during the evening she was somewhat ill and feverish, but not very sick.

A CAT'S ENCOUNTER WITH A TURTLE.

AN Indianapolis Maltese cat got to playing with a turtle, and tumbled and tortured the poor thing in the most cruel manner; but at length pussy met with a decided reverse. The turtle, by a lucky snap of its jaws, closed upon the tail of the cat, and clung there with the tenacity of a bull-pup, while the Maltese, with a horrid yowl and arched spine, danced the liveliest kind of a minuet. The tail swelled to an abnormal size, the turtle couldn't let go if he wanted to, and for a few seconds there was a revolution of cat and turtle, turtle and cat, with "m-o-o-w-s" and "spitz-spitz, fits-fits," until the spectators were fain to believe that instead of one turtle and one cat there were six or eight thousand cats. Finally the Maltese was released, and some hours later was seen gravely examining her caudal extremity, and evidently wondering "How was this, anyhow?" and it was noticable that when the turtle retraced its steps to the aquarium he had exclusive right of way, so far as the cat was concerned.

THE SWIMMING RACE.

BATH, L. I., is not easily excited; indeed, it was well known to be a fact that several sleepless had offered to bet untold sums of money that it was impossible to excite the City of Bath. Either these individuals were not present at Bath on Sunday, September 14th, or money was very scarce, for it is a well-authenticated fact that, on that auspicious day, Bath was more than excited. Indeed, it may be fairly said that Bath was wild with excitement, at least as much as its phlegmatic inhabitants could be.

From an early hour in the morning a dozen brave policemen paraded this beautiful but sedate little seaside resort.

In spite of the blundering stupidity of its leading inhabitants; in spite of the want of energy of its hotel proprietors; in spite of the thick-headed obstinacy of Fisherman Francis; and in spite of the general want of energy of all interested parties, Bath, L. I., was to be the scene of the grand international swimming match.

Mr. Gunther, the enterprising manager of the Brooklyn, Bath, and Coney Island Railroad, seemed to be the only person who had energy enough to have the interest of Bath before him; indeed, it is greatly due to his kindness that the affair came off at all.

At about 12:30, when the two barges, and the tug containing the swimmers, judges, scorers, referee, and spectators arrived upon the scene, in spite of the gloomy weather and drizzling rain, a large number of spectators had gathered together to witness the natatory contest between the sturdy champions of aquatic fame. The stake-boats had been placed one-fifth of a mile apart, and at a short distance from the shore.

At about 1:20, the five contestants stood side by side on the deck of the official barge, anxiously awaiting the word that was to send them on their journey.

The men, with the exception of Daily, greased from head to foot with porpoise-oil, vaseline, or varnish, presented a fine appearance of health and strength.

Captain Matthew Webb, of England, stands 5ft. 9in. in his bare feet, measures 42in. round the chest, weighs 196 pounds, and is forty-one years of age. His record is so familiar to every newspaper reader in the world that it is useless to give it in detail again. Let it suffice that we remind our readers that he is the man who swam across the British Channel in 22 hours, covering a distance, counting tide influences, of 39½ miles.

George H. Wade, champion of Brooklyn, stands 5ft. 7¾in. in height, is 41½in. round the chest, weighs 185 pounds, and is twenty-one years of age. His previous record is a brilliant one. In 1875 he beat H. Monroe, of Boston, in a five-mile race.

In 1876 he swam from Staten Island to Brooklyn (ten miles).

In 1877, beat Andrew Trautz by two yards in a five-mile race.

In 1877, two weeks after the last swim, beat Andrew Trautz again.

In 1877, beat Professor Van Buren, at Bath, L. I., in a two-mile race.

In 1878, beat Tom Coyle by one-quarter of a mile in a seven-mile race, at Bath, L. I.

Three weeks after the last swim, beat Coyle again by 2min. 7sec. at Philadelphia.

In 1878, swam a five-mile race with Frank Prints, the Western giant, but was seized with cramps.

Two weeks later, swam Frank Prints a four-mile race, and beat him by five yards.

In 1878, beat James Cunningham by twenty lengths in a three-mile race.

In 1879, beat Jack Peterson by two miles in a seven-mile race at Coney Island.

George Werhan is a jolly, fat, good-natured German produce-dealer; stands 6ft. 2in. in height, measures 48in. round the chest, weighs 300 pounds, and is forty-two years of age.

His previous record is a swim from Pier 1, North River, to Norton's point, Coney Island, which he easily defeated a professional swimmer by the name of Tuelf.

W. H. Daily, champion of California, stands 6ft. 1in. in height, measures 43in. round the chest, weigs 210 pounds, and is forty-two years of age.

He was born in Boston, Mass., but has been teaching swimming in Santa Cruz, Cal., for the last six years. He has swam numbers of races, has four gold medals, and has been instrumental in saving twenty-two lives. He was to have been presented with the Congressional gold medal, but through some mismanagement the affair fell through.

Ernest Von Schoening is an ex-lieutenant of the Prussian army, and served on the staff of Prince Frederick Charles during the Franco-Prussian War. He stands 5ft. 8in. in height, measures 42in. round the chest, weighs 198 pounds, and is twenty-eight years of age. Previous to entering the present contest, he had been teaching swimming at Bath, and was well known and respected by many of the inhabitants.

At 1h. 20min. and 30sec. exactly, the first man plunged into the water, and was soon followed by the others.

Daily shot ahead from the start, and seemed confident of winning; indeed, he had repeatedly offered

A CAT'S ENCOUNTER WITH A TURTLE.

CAPTAIN MATTHEW WEBB, CHAMPION SWIMMER OF ENGLAND.

to bet $500 that he would win the race. He was closely followed by Von Schoening, Wade third, Webb fourth, and Werhan last.

After a few turns, Von Schoening forged a little ahead, and Daily made an advance on Webb. Between this time and the finish of the fourth mile the Californian gained almost a quarter of a mile on Captain Webb, but it was evident that the effort had cost him much strength. During the fifth mile the captain overhauled the Californian, but did not seem anxious to pass him.

The presence of Webb just behind him worried Daily very much, and many times he made ineffectual efforts to increase his lead. The Englishman, however, preserved his even, mechanical stroke, and when the spurting was over was seen again to close up the gap. Meanwhile, Von Schoening had increased his lead until he was almost a whole lap ahead of the Englishman. Webb seemed to pay but little attention to his leader, his mind and limbs being occupied in getting into the second place held by Daily.

Several times Daily was refreshed with draughts of warm tea brought to him by his wife. The others took but little refreshments. Werhan, at the end of the third mile, was the last man in the race. At this stage of the contest Von Schoening was four and a half laps ahead of him, Daily three and a half, Webb three and a small fraction of a lap, and Wade two and a half.

At 4:45 Wade, having completed three miles two and three-quarter laps, retired, declaring that he could not see anything. Most of the time he swam with his head very low in the water, and the continual splashing of the waves against his eyes had quite inflamed them.

On turning the eastern stakeboat to make the twenty-fourth lap, Daily hugged it so close that he struck his knee-pan against the keel (though the reporter has never been able to understand up to the present moment how it is possible for a man swimming on his breast to strike his knee against a boat's keel), and struck out for the barge, on board of which he was lifted.

While the leading men were on their sixth mile, Mr. Herman Oelrichs, in his yacht *Active*, passed close to them, and recognizing Webb's blue cap rather than the face of the swimmer, cried out: "Go in, old boy! Go in and win!" Webb's gruff voice could be heard replying that such was his intention, and the strong tones certainly did not indicate that he was about to collapse. A few minutes afterward one of Von Schoening's admirers called out from a boat in which he was sitting, "How do you feel, Ernest?" and as the German replied, "I feel lully—how are you?" all who heard him were satisfied that, however unnecessary his question might be, his condition was at least as good as that of his opponent.

One hour later, to the surprise of every spectator, Captain Webb retired, leaving Von Schoening with two laps to the good. The captain seemed to the best of spirits and health when he was lifted to the deck of the barge. When questioned as to his reasons for retiring, he said:

"Oh, I began to feel queer."

"Did you feel queer for any length of time, or did you come aboard at the first indication of illness?"

"Oh, I felt it coming on for some time."

With the retirement of the captain the two alleged prizes—one of $1,500, another of $750—were left to Von Schoening and Werhan, the latter being something over a mile behind. At 7:09 Werhan called for a boat and was taken up. He declared that he could not make out the stake-boats on account of the darkness, and had gone half a mile out of his road on the last turn. He was as fresh as when he entered the brine, and wanted to bet $1,000 that he could remain five hours longer in the water.

Von Schoening, six minutes later, followed Werhan, and the contest (if such it may be called) was at an end.

The following is the score by laps:

Von Schoening—11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 1—56.

Webb—11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 1—31.

Werhan—11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 11111—25.

Daily—11111, 11111, 11111, 11111, 1111—24.

Wade—11111, 11111, 11111, 12—17.

TOPSY-TURVY:

OR,

The Boy Explorer,

AND

THE WORLD TURNED INSIDE OUT.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE—THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

"CAP'N WORTENDYKE," said Sam, the next morning after the *Jeannette* entered the straits, "what month is this?"

"January, my lad," was the captain's answer.

The two were sitting on a coil of rope in the bow, the captain smoking, and Sam whittling a stick into some quaint shape to amuse Tolula, who was standing by watching him.

ERNEST VON SCHOENING, CHAMPION SWIMMER OF AMERICA.

Sam continued his work for a few minutes in silence, then he said:

"Cap'n, don't you think this is queer sort of weather for January? Why, it's more like June."

"June, where?"

"Oh, you know what I mean. June anywhere where things are as they ought to be."

"As they were, I guess, you mean. I imagine they are as they ought to be here; though, as you say, it is a little queer to strike Summer weather in January in this latitude. But here comes De Vergne; probably he can tell you."

Lieutenant De Vergne sat down on the coil of rope, and in answer to Sam's question, after meditating a moment, remarked:

"Well, it always has been warmer here than in the same latitude elsewhere, but never anything like this. Still, the reason is easy enough understood, and we have talked it over so often that you ought to know it, Sam, by this time. It is the action of the combined currents of the Gulf Stream and the Kuro Sivo, or Japan current. Precisely as the withdrawal of the stream made it cold on the other side, its increased action makes it warmer here."

"Thank you for nothing, lieutenant. I knew all that before, as you say. I should think I ought to; we've had it for breakfast, dinner and supper ever since we left the Isthmus."

"What are you driving at, then?" asked Captain Wortendyke, who knew Sam was a thoughtful young man, and felt sure he had some good reason for his question.

"How long is it since we left the Isthmus, cap'n?"

"Why, it's—let me see—about five months."

"Rather a short time to do all we've done; don't you think so, cap'n?"

"Of course it's a short time. We've been a distance equal to more than round the world, and we've stopped some weeks at different places. Of course we couldn't have done it if we had not traveled at the rate of twenty miles an hour when we were traveling—"

"And been still at the rate of fifty miles an hour when we weren't traveling," interrupted Sam; and then all three laughed heartily.

"The boy has got some kink in his brain," thought De Vergne to himself—or words to that effect, in French, as people generally think in their own language—"I wonder what he means?"

Sam kept on whittling.

Presently he looked up and said:

"Cap'n, do you think I look the same as I did when we left the Isthmus?"

Captain Wortendyke looked at him in surprise.

"Well, yes—I don't know, though. Stand up."

Sam stood up.

"It seems to me you're grown taller. Got anything in your shoes?"

Sam laughed and kicked up his heels, to the astonishment of the Polar girl, who was looking on with interest. "Tell you what, lieutenant, that boy *has* grown. Why, when we were on the Isthmus, he wasn't more'n up to my shoulder; now look at him. He's as tall as I am."

Lieutenant De Vergne was struck with the fact—for fact it undoubtedly was—and began to ponder. Perhaps Sam's odd questions meant something, after all.

"That's a fact, cap'n; I noticed it myself this morning, and I took the trouble to measure. I'm five inches taller than I was when I left the Isthmus, by actual measurement."

The officers looked at each other in astonishment.

"An inch a month," said Captain Wortendyke, doubtfully.

"Humph!" said Sam, and he went on with his whittling.

The next minute the captain caught him by the ear and jerked him off the coil of rope, where he had seated himself again, scattering knife and block in two different directions.

Sam roared, Tolula screamed, and Lieutenant De Vergne stared.

Just then Emmeline came near, and Sam jumped away from the captain good-humoredly, at the same time crying out:

"Look at Miss Emmeline, captain; hasn't she grown?"

The girl blushed, as the two gentlemen looked at her fixedly, and stared from one to another.

"What do you mean, Sam?" said she, after waiting a moment for some explanation of this scene.

"You *have* grown, Miss Emmeline," said Lieutenant De Vergne. "I can see it plainly, now I look carefully at you."

"Do you know that is just what mamma said yesterday? She said she knew I was half a head taller than when we were at Valentia island. But I laughed at her. How could I grow in these few months?"

"But I've grown," said Sam, "for I've measured."

Emmeline looked him over from top to toe, and then at the others, helplessly.

"I do believe he has," she said, with a bewildered look in her face; "but come and measure with me. I know I was two inches taller than you when we were on the island."

"But you've grown, too," laughed Sam.

"Nonsense! I haven't."

"If Sam has grown, there is no reason why you should not," remarked Captain Wortendyke.

The two measured, standing back to back, when it was found that Sam overtopped the young lady a full inch and a half.

By this time the situation had become a quandary. There was no disputing the facts, and no accounting for them. Sam sat down on the coil of rope again and laughed till he cried.

GEORGE H. WADE, CHAMPION SWIMMER OF BROOKLYN.

WILLIAM H. DAILY, CHAMPION SWIMMER OF CALIFORNIA.

GEORGE WERHAN, CHAMPION SWIMMER OF WASHINGTON MARY

"Sam, if you don't tell what you mean——" and Captain Wortendyke made a threatening gesture at his ears again, at which the young man jumped to his feet and got out of the way, apparently unable to repress the shouts of laughter.

"What is the matter with him?" asked Emmeline, who began to think that Sam was getting hysterical.

"He's got some wrinkle in his head, and won't tell what it is," said Captain Wortendyke.

"I'll never tell, if it's never known," said Sam, firmly, and he returned to his seat and resumed his whittling. "You'll just have to find it out yourself."

"Find what out?" inquired Wilcox, who had observed the stir, and now came forward to learn what was the matter, accompanied by Greenough and Lieutenant Jasper.

"Find out what has made Miss Emmeline and Sam grow each about three to five inches in five months," answered Lieutenant De Vergne.

"Easy enough to account for in Sam," drawled the *Herald* correspondent. "He's got so conceited over his numerous discoveries that it has added inches to his stature and years to his age."

"You've just hit it," and Sam looked more knowing than ever. "But if you had waited to grow, you could have showed yourself as the champion dwarf till this minute."

This turned the laugh on Wilcox, and here Greenough put in his opinion.

"I can see the difference in Sam's height, and in Miss Emmeline's, too. Indeed, I notice a difference in myself; not in height, but I have filled out, and look older, somehow."

"So you've been looking in the glass, Mr. Greenough," said Emmeline, clapping her hands.

"Indeed, I assure you, you are mistaken. It was not in the least necessary, and besides, we have only a little seven-by-nine affair of a glass in our quarters. It would take me all day to see myself in that."

"Wouldn't pay you for the trouble—eh, Greenough?"

"It would be no trouble," replied Greenough, to the gentle sarcasm of the *Herald* correspondent. "Indeed, it is a pleasure which I very much regret not being able to enjoy."

"Here's Captain St. Clair," said Sam. "Now ask his opinion."

So the question as to the reason for the unaccountable change in the personal appearance of those who had been investigating themselves and each other was duly put to Captain St. Clair and the commander, and after them to Doctor Beaumont and the professor. The two latter gentlemen pooh-poohed the whole story. Mrs. St. Clair protested that Emmeline was taller, while her husband laughed at the idea, and so the subject was tossed about from one to another, without any conclusion being reached.

But now an incident occurred which distracted attention from this subject; only to bring it back again, however, with renewed force, a little later.

After rounding Cape Hope, the *Jeannette* crossed Kotzebue Sound, sighting no land until she reached the promontory jutting into the strait opposite East Cape.

This land was in sight while the discussion we have recorded was going on, and now the man on the lookout reported "A wreck."

"Where away?" shouted the first officer.

"Just under the rocks on our port bow, sir."

"Bear up and see what it is."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the steersman, and the *Jeannette's* bow was headed in shore, the mate taking soundings carefully, however, as there was plenty of shoal water and sand-bars along this coast.

"Can you make it out, captain?" said Lieutenant Jasper to Captain St. Clair, who had his glass always ready, and was now looking fixedly at the black object to be seen on the rocks.

"It's a small craft," said he, as he handed the glass to Jasper; "a schooner, I think."

Lieutenant Jasper took a long look. Then he wiped the glass and tried again. Then he seemed bothered, and handed the glass to Captain Wortendyke.

"Seems to me I recognize her, somehow," he remarked, as he did so.

The American captain looked carelessly at first, then more earnestly. Then he said:

"By thunder!" and that made every one interested, because Captain Wortendyke was a very cool man, and seldom indulged in expletives of any sort.

"What's the matter, captain?" said Wilcox, always curious when anything unexpected occurred.

"Sam, take a look at it," said the other, without answering the *Herald* correspondent, and he handed the spyglass to the lad, who took his turn at it.

"By Jimminy!" was the boy's remark, after a long look.

"What do you think, boy?" said Captain Wortendyke.

"Think! Why, if it isn't the craft we were building on Jeannette Island I'm crazy."

"Just my opinion to a dot," responded the captain.

"What, do you mean to say—pshaw! its nonsense!" cried Wilcox. "Why, she wasn't even launched."

"Well, somebody's launched her," said Sam. "I'll bet my head for a football that's our boat."

"The boy's right," added Captain Wortendyke. "I couldn't be mistaken on a boat I built myself. I know every line in her."

By this time the steamer was within a quarter of a mile of the shore, and the commander being unwilling to go any further in with her, and as every one was anxious to inspect the wreck at closer quarters, he ordered the anchor to be cast and a boat to be got ready.

While this was being done, however, Captain Wortendyke and Sam, with the assistance of Wilcox and Greenough, had got the *Admiral* over, and were soon in her and rapidly pulling to the shore. In the other boat the commander, Captain St. Clair, Jasper and Doctor Beaumont followed them, pulled by two sailors.

The *Admiral* made quick travel, and long before they reached the shore those on board knew that the battered wreck before them was their own little vessel, that they had left high and dry on the stocks at Jeannette Island.

At the time when the steamer had reached the island the vessel was completed in her hull, and the deck partly planked over, and as this was the case, Captain Wortendyke had worked on her from time to time, as he could get help, thinking she might be wanted, and had finished her, caulked her, and got her ready for launching, when they found the coal mine. It then became evident that she would be of no use to the party, and work was stopped on her.

The first boat landed the passengers, and Sam leaped lightly over the rocks and sprang on the deck of the vessel. He leaped down again as quickly as he had got up, with a cry of horror, and his face pale, and a scared look in his eyes.

The others hurried to the spot, and while Sam could only point in the direction he had left, they clambered over the side of the hull.

The occasion of the boy's emotion was at once seen by all.

Both masts were broken short off at the deck, nothing of them except their stumps being visible.

The deck itself was broken in many place, and had rotted away in many others.

All about the battered hulk showed decay and destruction.

But it was not this that had disturbed Sam, nor which now caused the elders of the party to experience a sensation of horror which they had never before known.

Huddled in the bow of the boat, scattered over its broken and shattered deck-planks, crowded together in the bottom of the hold, were masses of hideous skeletons, with ghastly and grinning heads, and their forms in every posture that could be devised to be the most hideous and the most horrifying.

It seemed as if there must be at least a hundred of them, so thickly were they clustered together.

"Good God!" cried Captain Wortendyke.

All stood silent and awe-stricken for some minutes.

"It must be that those fellows that chased us afterward went to the island, found her and launched her," said Captain St. Clair, who had come up with the second boat-load.

"Yes; but I can't understand what killed them or how they got here," remarked Lieutenant Jasper.

"Oh, they came down on the current," said Sam.

"But there was no current when we left," objected Wilcox.

In the meantime, the first painful effect over, Doctor Beaumont had stepped across the deck to one of the groups of skeletons, and was now observed to be carefully inspecting them. The others presently approached him, and found him with a skull in his hand, examining it.

"These are not savages," said he, looking up.

"What are they, then?" inquired the commander.

"Nor even men," continued Doctor Beaumont. "*They are monkeys!*"

"Can it be possible?" asked Captain St. Clair.

"There is no mistaking them. Look at the length of the arms. Observe the different shape of the hands and feet from your own. See, there is the stump of a tail!"

And it was so.

Closer inspection made known the fact that here were the skeletons of one hundred and eleven monkeys, which, by some means or other, must have succeeded in launching the vessel, and in navigating her until she reached the current. Of course, once in that, she had drifted easily to where they found her—a locality where the current was still noticeable, though not nearly as effective as it had been along the northern coast of Alaska.

Sam, reassured by the science of the doctor, had regained his normal spirits, and was now poking about among the bones, kicking them out of his way. Seeing something on the deck which was not a bone, he picked it up and gave a shout.

"That settles it," said he.

"What have you found?" inquired Lieutenant Jasper.

"Your knife," was the reply. "Don't you remember you lent it to me one day when I was down with you, when the building was going on, and I lost it?"

And he exhibited the rusty old tool which Jasper at once recognized as his property.

"What knocks me," said Captain Wortendyke, who had been ruminating, "is what makes the thing so horribly old-looking. And those skeletons; why, it can't be more than a few weeks since they got away with her."

"Humph!" remarked Sam.

Then the captain pounced on him.

"You young ruffian," said he, so emphatically that he seemed in grave earnest, "if you don't tell me what notion you've got in that noddle of yours, I'll take it out of you, as sure as you're born, and not dead."

"Guess, captain!" and Sam wriggled out of his grasp, and scampered off over the broken beams and planks.

"Confound that boy! He's a match for any of us, in science or anything else."

Doctor Beaumont had been a silent listener, and he now began to examine carefully the hull, and test the rotten fragments by breaking them. Then he looked at the nails, which Captain Wortendyke had put in the *Jeannette* after her arrival at the island, and he found these not only rusted, but almost eaten away with rust.

At length he closed his inspection and joined the others.

"Come here, Sam," he said.

Sam approached, and tried to look serious.

"Will you answer me one or two questions?"

"Don't mind."

"You have an idea in your head which you think explains the aged appearance of this wreck—just as you think it explains the alteration in your own personal appearance, have you not?"

"I bet I have."

"You think the same cause is responsible for both, do you not?"

"Rather."

"Will you tell me what you think that cause is?"

"Yes, I will."

"Well, what is it?"

"Time."

"Time!" repeated the *Herald* correspondent; "that's a smart answer. Why, time is just what they haven't had—not enough of it to add a hair to a man's stature, or to rot a chip on one of those timbers."

"Perhaps you'd like to gamble on that?" said Sam, saucily, and he jumped from the wreck to the shore, and lounged lazily in the direction of the boat.

The others soon followed, Doctor Beaumont, assisted by Lieutenant Jasper, carrying away one of the skeletons to preserve as a trophy of their visit, and a souvenir of the marvelous occurrence of whose hapless result they had been a witness.

Arrived on board the steamer, so much discussion occurred on this unexpected and almost miraculous event, that Sam's curious answers to Doctor Beaumont were for the time forgotten.

The *Jeannette* got under way, and they were soon steaming southward again.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NEARING THE END—ALASKA AND A NEW METROPOLIS.

BY this time, and through assiduous application, the Polar girl, as Sam had christened her, had become sufficiently well acquainted with the English language to carry on conversation on matters of more importance than the ordinary subjects of food and daily avocations.

On the evening of the day concerning whose adventure the reader has just been informed, several of our party were gathered on deck, enjoying the moonlit sea and the soft tropical breeze that fanned them as the steamer moved slowly along the coast.

Some one began to question Tolula as to her people and her former life, and little by little her story developed itself.

To Doctor Beaumont and Professor Corbeau this story was especially interesting, as it confirmed many and corrected others of the views they had long held with regard to the ancient populations of Western America.

Tolula was intelligent, had come of a good family, and had been educated in the best fashion known to her country. So she was qualified to give much and varied information of a character the most interesting to her hearers.

Her race, she said, had a tradition which was handed down among families, that many periods before they had dwelt in another land far to the eastward, and south of that which they now inhabited.

At that time, the legend ran, some strange and terrible convulsion had changed the face of the earth, so that their country, which had formerly been productive of fruits and rich foliage, became a scene of desolation and destruction.

Whether this was caused by an earthquake, a volcanic eruption or an inundation was not told, but the result was that the inhabitants were forced to emigrate, and leaving their household gods behind them, to seek a haven in some more favored region.

They divided according to their various ideas, some going to the west, others to the south. One large party wended its way northward, and after many dangers and trials, losses by sickness and death, and accidents "by flood and fire," at length reached a land where they found a climate and vegetation similar to those of the home they had left.

From all that could be gathered concerning this exodus from the East, it appeared that the country which had been abandoned was Siberia, where, as is generally known, are still found remains of tropical animals buried in the ice.

They had crossed the sea from the mainland in canoes, and had settled in the new country which they had discovered, and which, at that time, must have been a very extensive territory.

Here they had grown and flourished, until they became a vast people—too great in numbers, indeed, for the country they inhabited.

Great cities had been built, extensive lands brought under cultivation, a government founded, which had become a powerful empire, and then migrations had been undertaken, and large numbers of men, women and children had gone in fleets of boats to the westward and south, until they had found a new continent, where they had settled.

This continent, it appeared from the story, was North America, and the race which had once swept down the Mississippi Valley, and along the Pacific Coast to Central and South America, instead of having crossed Behring's Straits from Asia, had come down from the region about the North Pole.

Occasionally a stray traveler returned from these journeys, and told that his people were settled in large numbers at different points along the slope of the great new world, and that they had builded cities and established themselves permanently.

But after a time the country which was the fountain-head of this migration became changed in its turn.

Earthquakes shook it, and immense territories were swept under the sea.

Volcanic eruptions attacked it, and hundreds of miles became waste deserts.

Inundations of the most devastating character submerged broad districts, destroying lives by thousands and tens of thousands.

Then the sea having increased and the land lessened, migration became impossible on the one hand, while it became unnecessary on the other, as the race dwindled.

The old cities tumbled to ruins, and new ones were built on their sites.

But the rights and ceremonies of the ancient worship of this people were continued, and once every year a grand sacrifice of victims appointed for the purpose was offered to appease the wrath of the formidable deities who had so chastened this once numerous and happy people.

It is true there were still large cities, and wide-spreading territories of cultivated and inhabited land, but in proportion to former times these were as nothing.

Age after age had passed away, and now none returned any more from their migration to the far south, and finally their story was forgotten, or dimly remembered only as a legend to be repeated from father to son, and thus perpetuated.

There were other legends among this ancient people.

And one of these ran to the effect that not far away to the north of them there dwelt a race of beings superior in natural endowments, gifted with superhuman powers, but wicked and malicious at heart.

Sometimes some of her people, Tolula said, had set forth in their canoes to find and communicate with this curious race.

Such adventurers never returned, nor where they ever heard of more.

And so when the *Jeannette* had run heedlessly into the Polar cavity, and had so discovered the region inhabited by the race of people whose malignant power had been sought to be exercised against our friends, Tolula had scented the danger. Then, too, the interview which she had held with the old man from her own country had still further informed her; but, unable to speak the English language at that time fluently enough to inform her new friends of their danger, she had necessarily kept silent.

She alone of all on board the *Jeannette* had not been surprised at the demonstration of powers more than human which had been made by this people, for this accorded with what she had heard of them from her childhood up. But none were more pleased than she when accident, and the enterprise and curiosity of Sam and the *Herald* correspondent, had resulted in an escape from the dangers which threatened the whole ship's party, and from which there would otherwise certainly not have been one to depart and tell the tale.

In answer to questions with regard to Sam's sudden appearance in her country, Tolula said that this was an incident as alarming to that people as the Polar race was to the party on board the *Jeannette*.

Sam had saved his life by the possession and use of his wonderful "thunder-spear," as she called it; and, besides, he was supposed to be one of the northern race which was so feared by them. His manner having indicated a friendly spirit, and no malevolent intent, the visit had been looked upon with a favorable impression—until the chief had learned from his spy that there was a great boat in the bay loaded with many more of the same species.

Then the inhabitants became alarmed, and the chief himself considered it best to imprison Sam, at least, as a hostage, until it should be found what was going to be done by his companions.

Even this, however, was not enough, and he would inevitably have been executed but for Tolula herself.

Being one of the privileged ones, and having witnessed and heard everything from her position among those who were admitted at the court at which Sam had assisted, she had found out that death was to be his portion, and had determined to save the handsome young stranger even at the risk of her own life.

How satisfactorily this intention had been accomplished—though the aid of Captain Wortendyke—the reader has already been informed.

Tolula had no special ties to bind her to her country, while she had a very special reason for wishing to get away from it.

This was, in fact, one of those who had been selected for the next batch of victims to the ancient rites of sacrifice of her people, and was quite willing to forego the honor. So she had urged her own claims upon the one she had saved, and thus managed her own escape.

* * * * * * *

This narrative was drawn from the girl on the evening in question, by means of shrewd questioning, mostly on the part of Doctor Beaumont and Professor Corbeau.

The *Herald* correspondent had professed himself immensely interested at first, and had taken voluminous notes for future professional use. But, somehow, long before the conclusion was reached, he had disappeared from the group who were listening to Tolula, and when his absence was at length discovered, it was found that "Emmeline was also among the missing.

"Oh, they are off together, mooning somewhere," said Mrs. St. Clair to her husband, when this fact was made known. "Let them be; they will appear before bedtime."

The fact was that Wilcox was a favorite with Mrs. St. Clair, who was in constant terror lest Emmeline should become attached to one of the officers, and some time or other be taken out of her sight and society altogether. Or, worse yet, that she would marry Greenough, of whom the good lady had not the highest opinion, thinking him dull and wanting in energy; or run away with Sam, of whom she had a perfect horror on account of the facility which he possessed for tumbling into startling adventures.

Wilcox had played his cards well with the mother of the charming Emmeline, assuring her that on his return to New York he should become an author of the sensation book of the day, and a distinguished man altogether, like his prototype, Stanley.

She expected that the *Herald* correspondent would settle down in New York, resting upon his laurels, and believed he would make an admirable husband for her daughter. And in this belief she rested, while the happy pair, conscious of her acquiescence, "mooned," as she expressed it, to their entire satisfaction.

But, on the present occasion, they unfortunately neglected to provide for one possible interruption to their felicity; an omission which was destined to create a sensation of quite a different nature from any that had yet been experienced by our explorers.

This interruption was to be provided by the ubiquitous and original Sam.

When this young man discovered that his perpetual torment, Wilcox, had left the party and gone off for a little scouring with the fair Emmeline, he determined to set his wits to work and to lay a trap for them. The group broke up and retired to the cabin. Sam set forth to ransack the steamer in search of his intended victims.

He hunted for them from one end of the *Jeannette* to the other, but was long in finding them; but at last he discovered the two runaways snugly ensconced in the *Admiral*, which hung over the quarter, attached to the davits, just as she had been left after the visit to the wreck.

So interested had those in her become in their discovery, that on getting aboard ship they had fastened the boat but loosely after hoisting her up.

Sam found, on inspection, that it would only require that a noose should be slipped to let the *Admiral* down in the water, and he determined to devote himself to this practical joke as a part of his regular business as a humorist.

The *Jeannette* was steaming along at about a ten-knot speed, leaving a pretty rough and foamy wake astern.

Wilcox and Emmeline sat in the stern of the *Admiral*, consulting over the past, the present and the future, and little imagining that an enemy was so near them with such dire intent in his mind.

"And you liked me when you first saw me?" she asked, tenderly.

"How could I help it?" was the gallant response, accompanied by a squeeze of the hand, which, being witnessed by Sam from above, caused that young satyr to grin from ear to ear.

"And you think you really care more for me than for any girl you ever knew?"

"Oh, I'm sure of it. You see, I have never been much of a ladies' man. Being obliged to be traveling about so much on account of my profession, I have had little opportunity for such association. Not that it would have made any difference if I had," added the *Herald* correspondent, conscious that this statement might not be considered altogether complimentary, "for I am quite sure I never should have met any one I could care so much for as I do for you."

"Oh, I wish I could believe you."

"Can you not trust me?"

"And you will never care for any one else but me?"

"Never in the world!" declared Wilcox. "Though, to tell you the truth, I think it ought to be you that should make protestations. You know you have been an unconscionable flirt."

"Now, Theodore, that is cruel of you. I can't see how you can possibly call me a flirt. With whom could I flirt, pray, up in this desolate country?"

"Oh, that is all very well, but you must remember some very interesting passages with Greenough and Sam——"

"Sam!" ejaculated the girl, with a vast amount of contempt in her voice; "Sam, indeed! Well, I should have to be hard pushed for amusement to flirt with a boy."

As the young man in question was lying on his chest on the taffrail, and heard all this, his sentiments may be imagined.

"Flirt with a boy?" he repeated after her, under his breath. "Humph! you've got a poor memory. I'll jog it a little, presently."

But by this time the little altercation had gone as far as was wise, and the two lovers were busily engaged in making it up.

Sam heard muttered ejaculations.

"I think you are real unkind," and "I assure you, Emmeline," and "Oh, it's all very well for you to pro est, now, but, really, Emmeline, I promise you——"

At this moment Sam loosened the rope with which he had been tampering ever since he first discovered the situation. It slid easily through the block, letting the boat drop gently and equally down upon the water, and then there was a wild shriek as the rope slipped through Sam's hands, and the boy stood aghast at the sight of the *Admiral* far astern, plunging and tumbling in the rough wake, with Wilmox standing up, shouting and gesticulating, and Emmeline crouched at his feet, apparently in a dead faint.

(To be continued.)

"Topsy-Turvy" was commenced in No. 665.

The Young Hero of Cape Ann;

Or,

The Fishing Trip of an American Boy.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER X.

THE ATTACK.

THE rosy cheeks of Miss Palmer caught a deeper hue as George clasped her little palm.

Her eyes sparkled with joy, and her voice was soft and low, as the two spoke to each other.

"This happy meeting has made a new man of me," said George. "I have been very anxious about you, have thought about you through all my hardships and sufferings, and have feared that you were lost."

"And I—we all," said Bertha, "had given up all hope of ever seeing you again. I am so glad to meet you at last."

Explanations were now made on both sides.

Mr. Coleman informed George that the boats had provisions in them. He had seen to that after they were lowered. It was the breaking of the pin to which both warps were fast which had caused the boats to drift away from the *Columbia*.

He had endeavored to overtake her, but in that gale and at the speed she was going, he had not been able to do so.

All aboard had given up the schooner for lost. They had, however, been cruising about ever since, hoping to pick up those who had been left aboard clinging to some piece of wreck or afloat in the dingy.

When George had finished his explanations, he turned to Miss Palmer.

"The craft containing those maniacs had evidently once been a schooner. Old Tom and I conjectured that possibly she might have been your father's lost vessel."

"Ah, would that I had seen her!" cried Bertha, clasping her hands. "I think I could have told in a moment if she was my father's schooner."

"What sort of a craft was the *Falcon*? Had she a rounded stern?"

"Yes, yes."

"Clipper bows?"

"Yes."

"So had this vessel, but that is nothing. Many schooners are like that."

"What sort of a figurehead had she?" inquired Bertha.

"The figurehead had been nearly broken off. There was only the leg of a man remaining."

"Of wood?"

"Yes."

"Carved to represent the old style of dress—a stocking, the limb bared to the knee?"

"Yes."

Bertha's eyes glistened. "So far, everything corresponds with my father's craft," she said.

Old Tom looked doubtful.

"Don't be too sure, Miss Palmer," he said. "I have seen plenty craft with just such figure-heads—William Penn's, Roger Williamses and many others. It is common enough. There was one thing, though, which I certainly thought a little odd. That crazy craft had a streak of red paint on her cabin door, right down the middle."

Bertha shook her head.

"My father's vessel had nothing like that, but it might have been done afterward."

"True. Then there was another peculiarity, which I scarcely think would have been done afterward, except by a shipbuilder."

"And that?" she asked.

"The wheel-spokes were inlaid with pieces of smooth walrus-bone."

Again Bertha shook her head.

"I am sure the *Falcon's* was not so," she said.

"And again I noticed a picture of a small American flag painted on top of the capstan."

"Yes," cried Bertha, her eyes glistening, "our schooner had just such a flag painted on the capstan."

Old Tom looked puzzled.

"It kind of looks as if that craft was the *Falcon*, and then again as if it was not. I certainly cannot account for the wheel being as it is."

"I am sure the *Falcon's* wheel was not so," said Bertha.

"I wish you could have seen the vessel."

He reflected a moment, and then continued:

"What kind of a cabin-top had the *Falcon*? a flat or a peaked one?"

"Flat," answered Bertha, promptly.

"The craft we were aboard of had a peaked one.'

"I scarcely think it could have been the *Falcon*, after all," said George. "As to the flag-picture on the capstan, two skippers might possibly have had the same fancy——"

"Beggin' your pardon, my boy," interrupted Old Tom, "I don't think it probable, although, of course, it isn't impossible."

Other peculiarities of the vessel were mentioned, and it was found that some corresponded with those of the *Falcon*, and that others did not.

"I hope we will fall in with that crazy craft again, so that the matter can be settled," said Mr. Coleman, the first officer.

"But we have not provision enough to last us if we cruise in search of her, to say nothing of the peril from storms in open boats."

"Ay, ay," said Old Tom. "By-the-way, it's a wonder to me you were not swamped in the last storm."

"We had hard work to keep afloat," answered Coleman. "but we managed it by lashing both boats together and keeping head to sea."

"Ah now," said George, "our only course is to steam for the Irish coast, off which we may possibly fall in with some friendly American craft."

"The chances are against it," said Coleman. "But it is all we can do."

The broken, capsized boat from which George and his two companions had been taken was left adrift, as it could be of no use to the party, and the light vessels were then headed for the coast of Ireland.

The three late castaways lay down to seek that repose which they so much needed.

When at length they awoke, Coleman and his men had a dinner ready for all.

The boiled ham, salt junk and hard sea-biscuits were keenly relished by the hungry party.

Meanwhile the boats made good headway.

Before night the coast of Ireland was sighted, its lofty rocks and headlands looming up through a light mist.

By the next morning the boats were within twenty miles of land.

The party looked for a sail, but they could see none, for the coast of a small island.

The black rocks of the coast, indented here and there by small bays, towered high in air.

No sign of a habitation or of a human being was there visible.

"We are approaching a wild, uninhabited part of the country," said George.

As he spoke he turned and looked keenly astern, where a light fog was being dissipated by the wind.

There, not two leagues distant, he beheld a sail!

He seized the glass, and a brief survey showed him that the sail was that of the English schooner, the *Britton*.

"There comes our enemy," he cried. "He has doubtless seen us and is heading this way."

"And means to try to capture us," said Old Tom.

"Thunderation! what a pity we have no arms! If we had, darn me if I think it would be a bad plan to try to get possession of *his* craft to pay him off for taking *ours!* I don't believe he has more than fifteen men aboard."

"There is another sail astern of him," said George, as he looked through the glass. "I ought to know that vessel. It is my own beautiful craft."

"Jerusalem! how it makes my blood bile to think of those colony rascals having that craft in their clutches!"

"We must try to repossess ourselves of her," said George.

"Ay, ay, my boy, but how on 'arth are we going to do it, seeing as we have no arms—nothing but a few sheathe-knives?"

"That remains to be seen. I will try and think of some plan."

"The cussed varmints ain't going to give us the chance, they can help it," said Tom. "They are overhauling us hand over fist."

"They won't come much nearer the coast. They will take to the boats."

Before noon the young captain and his party landed on the coast.

They hauled up the boats and concealed them in a rocky cave, covering the hollow in which they had placed them with fragments of rock.

George, climbing half way up a rugged height, discovered a cave overlooking the sea, and selected it for their present quarters.

Extending along in front of the entrance to this cave was a broad platform of rock, while above the entrance a huge, rugged mass projected over it.

This was cracked in many places, and looked as if it could be easily displaced, but the youth anticipated no danger from this circumstance, as he had often seen rocks in this state holding together for years.

The provisions, which had been removed from the boats, were brought up to the cave; also the sails, which were taken off the mast, to serve as resting-places on the hard floor of the retreat.

The ascent to this cavern was steep and somewhat difficult, and as the party at length mounted toward it, George gave his hand to Bertha to assist her.

All were soon ensconced in their new quarters.

"Now, then," said George, "those colony fellows, unless I am much mistaken, will find it hard work to capture us where we are."

"But we have no arms," said Coleman.

"As we have not," said George, "we will use stones. Many have been thrown lying about, and a large quantity must be gathered and brought here. We can roll them down upon the colony men, if they try to get up to us."

"Ay, ay," said Old Tom, his eyes lighting up. "Nothing on 'arth would give me more satisfaction than to take off a few of the Britishers' heads with those stones."

All the men went to work gathering boulders.

There was ample time for this, as the *Britton* now lay at anchor, waiting for the *Columbia* to come up with the vessel of her crew.

A large heap of boulders were brought to the rocky platform, and piled up in the position in which they could be most readily used.

After their labor was ended, the party sat down and partook of their frugal repast.

A couple of hours passed ere the *Columbia* came up and anchored within two ships' lengths of the *Britton*. A boat was then lowered from the latter.

It glided alongside of the *Columbia*, and with the aid of his glass George could see several men in consultation on the quarter-deck.

Not long after two boats from the *Britton* and one from the *Columbia*, were seen making for the shore, full of men.

There were about twenty-four in all, some armed with muskets and others doubtless provided with pistols.

As they came on the English flag was raised over the stern of the *Columbia's* boat—the one which had still remained aboard after Coleman had lowered the two in which he had been cast adrift.

"Darn the scamp!" gritted Old Tom, through his clinched teeth. "That's enough to start the bile of a codfish! D'ye see it, George? They've h'isted their colors above our own boat!"

"I see it," answered George, with flashing eyes. "They'll find what's in store for them if they try to get up here to us! We had our colors in one of the two boats. Did you bring them up here?"

"Ay, ay," said Old Tom; "here they are."

As he spoke he showed a small American flag to the youth.

George secured it to the boat-hook, and drove the end of the pole, with the colors fluttering from it, into a cleft near the edge of the platform.

"Let them get those colors away from us if they can," he said.

"That's it, my boy," said Old Tom, with quiet satisfaction; "that's the way to put it. And now, then," he added, pointing to the colors, "if that ain't just the purtiest flag in all creation, with those bright stripes and stars, then I ain't no judge of matters."

The boats were pulled alongside of a flat rock at the base of the cliff.

"Better come down from there!" cried the captain of the *Britton*, after he and his men had sprung out.

"We prefer to stay where we are," answered George, "and if you know what is best for you you will put back to your craft."

"Ho, ho!" laughed the other captain; "don't be alarmed. We will not hurt you if you comply with our wishes."

"Darn you and your wishes!" yelled Old Tom, thrusting his head over the edge of the cliff. "We will give you a taste of our'n if you try to come up here."

"How did you escape from the run of the schooner?" inquired the other.

"That is none of your concern," answered George. "Excepting so far as you'll have to answer for the farnal mischief you've done!" put in Old Tom.

"Come, come!" cried the colony captain; "don't get into a passion. As England and America are not at war now, I don't want to proceed to extremities. Promise me that you'll fish no more upon our waters and I'll give you back your vessel and leave you in peace. You have no arms, and but a few men, while we have both muskets and pistols and twenty-four stout fellows. You must see that you can do nothing."

"Your proposal," answered George, "to take away our rights of fishing is simply ridiculous; and, of course, I will not entertain it. As to your 'stout fellows,' if you presume to send them up the cliff to attack us, we shall take the liberty of sending them down again."

"Ay, ay!" cried Tom, "we'll take some of the 'stoutness' out of 'em."

"Your blood be upon your own heads, then!" shouted back the colony captain.

"I calculate some of it will be upon yours before you and your darned Britishers git through with us!" cried Old Tom.

The other captain and Will Brunt consulted together in a low voice for a few minutes.

They looked up at the cliff, as if to discover whether the cave could not be reached by some roundabout way.

This, however, they perceived could not be done, for the cliff projected from the coast, and its sides were too steep to mount.

To get to the cave they must ascend the rocky wall sloping down from the platform in front of it.

While climbing it, it would almost be impossible for them to make use of their muskets or pistols, for not only would the party above be sheltered from their fire by their position, but the assailants would be obliged for most of the distance to have recourse both to their hands and feet to get up the steep precipice.

Their captain, however, was a man of dogged resolution, and he finally gave the word for his followers to mount, leading the way himself with a loaded pistol in one hand.

"Look sharp, men," cried Old Tom, as he grasped one of the boulders.

But George restrained him.

"Not yet," he said. "We will wait as they did at Breed's Hill, until we 'see the whites of their eyes,' then——"

"Good," said Tom. "What do you think of that, men?"

The men answered with a cheer.

"This way, Captain Merle," said Will Brunt, as he diverged to where the cliff was more rugged.

The climbers were soon half way up to the cave.

"Now, men, steady, and let them have it!" cried George, in a ringing voice.

In an instant every man dropped a boulder. The large pieces of rock came crashing down the steep declivity with the noise of thunder, and more than half of the ascending party were sent rolling, bruised and bleeding, to the base of the cliff, fifteen feet below.

Most of them were able to rise and totter off, but several lay stunned and motionless where they had fallen.

Captain Merle and twelve of his men had escaped injury by crouching under the shelter of an overhanging mass of rocks, which warded off the boulders.

"Come back!" he shouted, to those who were limping off.

They obeyed, and were soon with the men under shelter of the rock.

"As soon as we have rested," said Captain Merle, "we will make one bold dash for the platform where those Yankees are. We have only thirteen feet further to go, and I shall think it strange if some of us don't succeed in getting up there."

"Come on!" cried Old Tom from above. "We've got plenty more. Who's next? Darn me if this ain't just the best game of bowls I ever played."

"We'll give you 'bowls,' my fine old Yankee mackerel, before long," growled Captain Merle.

He waited a few minutes longer.

"Now, up and at them!" he shouted, as before, leading the way.

"Give it to them!" shouted George, from above; "let each aim for his man!"

Crash! came a perfect shower of rocks!

Six of the party succeeded in dodging them, among them Captain Merle, but all the others were thrown off their feet, with bruised legs and toes, and sent rolling rapidly to the base of the cliff.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Old Tom. "See those British sine-pins tumble! Darn their eyes! I only wish they'd keep on rollin' till they got to the bottom of the sea!"

Captain Merle planted both feet firmly against a spur of rock, and, catching sight of Tom's face above him as he spoke, he aimed his pistol at his head and fired.

But just as he pulled trigger, another boulder took his feet from under him, causing his shot to go straight up in the air, and sending him sliding down the precipice on his side.

He made frantic efforts to stop himself, but in vain; he could not check his downward career until he was within two feet of the base of the cliff, when his feet struck a ledge with a force that caused every bone in his body to shake.

Five of his companions followed, rolling after him before another shower of boulders.

Will Brunt was now the only one of the gang who remained uninjured.

With almost inconceivable activity, he had contrived to dodge every boulder that was sent down, and when the last shower of them came, he was under the shelter of a small, jutting rock, about seven feet below the platform.

This point of rock hid him from the gaze of the party above.

He remained there a few seconds, and then, creeping along under the ledge to a point where the edge of the platform was so high as to conceal him from the Americans, he commenced to creep upward on his hands and knees.

In this way he passed the corner of the platform still unseen, as a column of rock there screened his form, and now clutching the rugged spurs that offered him a hold, he finally gained the rocky root projecting over the entrance to the cave.

Scarcely, however, had he reached it, when it began to totter, and he became aware that it was about to fall!

In fact, this huge, overhanging mass, weakened in the place where it had been so long held by its own weight, was prepared to give way under a slight pressure. Brunt instantly sprang back, just in time to save himself from going with it.

Down it fell, with a loud crash, on the platform below, in front of the cave, completely blocking up the entrance.

George and his companions, previously warned of its descent by the dropping of some pieces from it, had rushed into the cavern, and thus saved themselves from being crushed by the mass. Now, all were inclosed, as it were, in a rocky tomb.

A deep gloom, only slightly relieved by a faint streak of light that streamed through a small crevice, surrounded them.

"Well, now," cried Old Tom, who was the first to speak, "this is sartainly a most unlooked-for accountstance. Darn me if I expected this!"

"We are completely locked in," said George, as he peered through the crevice, and perceived that the mass of fallen rock covered nearly the whole platform, and even partially protruded over it.

"How are we ever to get out?" cried Bertha, in alarm.

"We have not even a hatchet with us," said Coleman.

"And the rock is too hard to chip off with our knives," said Steve.

"It's likely those tarnal Britishers will open a way out for us," said Old Tom, "and that's the worst of it. I would rather starve to death in this hole than fall into their hands."

"I don't think they will take the trouble to get us out," said Coleman. "They will leave us here, unless I am mistaken."

The party listened, but they heard no voices outside.

Peering through the chink, George, half an hour later, saw the boats, with all the men from the two schooners, glide alongside of their vessels.

The crevice commanded a view of the sea for a long distance, and as the youth looked far beyond the two schooners, he beheld a sail.

"Pass me the spyglass, Steve," he said.

Steve handed him the glass, and George, putting the end against the crevice, thus had the strange sail in the line of his vision.

"A sloop-of-war!" he cried. "Perhaps an American, too."

There was a cheer from his companions.

"Hah, hah!" cried Old Tom, "wouldn't I like to see her pepper them British colony chaps for the way they've served us!"

"That is what hurried those fellows away so fast," cried Steve, "They saw the sail, and were afraid to persevere in their rascally work. Perhaps they would otherwise have tried to get us out for the sake of capturing us."

"Is there no way we can make our situation known to the people aboard that sloop-of-war?" inquired Bertha.

"A good idea," said George. "Fortunately, I have brought the boat-hook, with the flag attached to it, into this cave when we ran in."

"And what good is that going to do you, boy?" inquired Old Tom.

"Don't you see?"

"No, I'm darned if I do."

"We can run out that boat-hook with the flag attached to it for a signal.

Old Tom clapped his hands together.

"Well, now, I calculate that's about the thing. But will the signal be seen?"

"There is the difficulty. The dark wall of rock throws a shadow which may hide the signal. We will try it, at any rate."

The flag was securely attached to the boat-hook, and rolled tightly around it.

The pole was then thrust through the crevice, after which George, by turning it round, unrolled the flag, which now fluttered outside."

As the staff filled up the crevice, he could not see whether the signal attracted attention or not.

He left it in its place for about half an hour, and then pulling it in, he again peered through the opening.

But he could no longer see the the sloop-of-war.

Where she had been there was now a thick fog.

A boat, however, was heading toward the coast from the schooner.

"What do you see, my boy?" said Old Tom.

George informed him.

"That's as bad as can be," said Tom. "Depend upon it, there's some more rascality brewing."

The boat was soon so near the base of the cliff that George could no longer see it.

The party listened in painful suspense.

At last they heard a voice near the crevice.

It was that of Will Brunt, who had climbed up to the edge of the platform. "Hello, there!" he called.

"Well?" cried George.

"We are going to leave you to die like rats in a hole."

"Oh! out, you infarnal rascal!" cried Old Tom.

"The captain saw your signal, and I suggested that we should put a stop to that business."

"Oh, you darned scamp!" shouted Tom.

"And so I am going to put a stop to it."

Ten minutes later something rolled down and fell against the crevice, closing up the only opening through which a view could be obtained of the sea.

Brunt had pulled down a heavy boulder to a ledge wide enough to support it in front of the opening.

"Cuss the villain!" cried Old Tom, wrathfully.

A laugh of triumph could be faintly heard outside, after which all was still.

"Fortunately," said George, "there is a crack left here and there."

"Ay, but not large enough for us to see anything through it," responded Old Tom.

"Could we not contrive to push that piece of rock away over the opening?" inquired Bertha.

"We might if we had anything to do it with," said Coleman—"a crowbar, for instance."

"Ay," said Tom, "if we had a crowbar we could do better than that. We could work our way out."

"We have nothing but sheath-knives, and we can do nothing with them," said George.

"We will die here!" cried Bertha, much alarmed.

(To be continued.)

"The Young Hero of Cape Ann" was commenced in No.

THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.
ITS ORGANIZATION.
(Continued.)

WHEN a vessel is to be placed in commission, or to be prepared for a cruise, she is supposed to be in good condition and capable of weathering the heaviest storm. Her officers are then detailed by the Navigation Bureau at Washington, and ordered to report for duty at a stated time. The Captain, in company of the Executive and other responsible officers of the station, inspects every part of the vessel, to be assured that she is, in all respects, seaworthy; also to suggest improvements, if he should consider them needed. The Executive Officer of the vessel prepares his watch, quarter, mess and station bills, and repairs to the Receiving Ship to inspect the crew detailed to be commissioned. He sees that the men are physically qualified to perform the cruise, he questions them as to their sea service, on board of what vessel they served, what were the stations assigned to them; indeed, he gathers the information necessary to facilitate stationing the crew to the duties they are most familiar with. He examines their fit-out of clothes, hammocks, mess pans, pots, etc., that the crew may be prepared to commence work immediately after their transfer.

THE YOUNG HERO OF CAPE ANN.—"JUST AS HE PULLED THE TRIGGER, ANOTHER BOULDER TOOK HIS FEET FROM UNDER HIM, CAUSING HIS SHOT TO GO STRAIGHT UP IN THE AIR, AND SENDING HIM SLIDING DOWN THE PRECIPICE ON HIS SIDE."—SEE PAGE 167.

The Petty Officers are the first selected, and should be man-of-war's men who are competent to guide and command their subordinates. The Ship's Cook is generally the first Petty Officer chosen. He and his assistant clean the galley and cooking utensils, and then prepare the rations for the meals of the crew.

When the vessel is to be "turned over," or "put in commission," the Commanding Officer, accompanied by the Executive of the yard—if he is not the senior in rank of the Commandant of the Station—repairs to the quarter-deck of the vessel, where the officers and crew have assembled, and reads his orders to assume command. The ensign and pendant are hoisted at the roll of the drum, the marines presenting arms, and officers saluting the flag by raising their caps.

As soon as these formalities are over the Executive messes the crew and details the mess cooks. He then assigns to the men their hammock numbers and stations at fire quarters, at inspection, and muster at quarters, and then orders the Boatswain and his Mates to "pipe down."

It is advisable not to overwork the crew on the first day, but to organize, "clear up," and clean decks, to put everything in place, and let the crew become familiar with the part of the ship to which they are stationed.

The crew have two numbers, the ship's numbers, or number on the paymaster's books, and hammock numbers. The men "tally" or mark their clothing with the ship's number. The hammock numbers are also the numbers used for stationing.

The hammocks are oblong pieces of canvas, six feet in length by two and a half feet wide. The clews, which have rings to hook by, are attached to eyelits in the hammock, head and foot. When there is sufficient room to admit of more than eighteen inches space—the allowance of each man—a head stretcher is used to spread out the hammock. The hammock numbers are *red* and *black*, according to the watches. To "lash a hammock" is to round it up and pass a lashing around it and the clews, which are "fastened" and spread along it. To "sling a hammock" is to cast off the lashing and hook the rings over the number assigned to each man as his sleeping-place.

Formerly the hammocks were used as a hint to worthless characters that their presence on board could be dispensed with. If a man was a "skulk," a "shirk," or a dirty fellow, he received a month's pay and was sent ashore with his bag of clothes and his hammock, generally a stained one. He was given to understand that he was sent ashore to scrub his hammock, and if, on his return to the vessel, there was a spot left on it, he would be punished with the cat-o'-nine-tails. The men seldom returned to have their hammocks inspected. Their absence was considered "desertion," and not as "Discharged out of the service."

A ship's company is divided into two watches, the starboard watch, composed of odd numbers, 1, 3, 5, 7, etc., and the port watch, composed of the even numbers, 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.

If the vessel is a ship the crew is divided into Forecastle men; Foretop men; Maintop men; Mizzentop men; After Guard; Petty Officers; Petty Officers' Idlers; Idlers.

The Petty Officers are principally good seamen, Sailmakers, Carpenters, Master-at-Arms, Armorers, etc.; men who have rendered long and faithful service, or who are competent and reliable. They rank as follows:

APPOINTED PETTY OFFICERS.

Master-at-Arms; Ship's Yeoman; Apothecary; Engineer's Yeoman; Paymaster's Yeoman.

RATED PETTY OFFICERS.

Seamen Gunners; Chief Boatswain's Mate; Boatswain's Mate; Chief Gunner's Mate; Gunner's Mate; Chief Quartermaster; Quartermaster; Coxswain; Captain of Forecastle; Captain of Top; Captain of After Guard; Quarter Gunner; Carpenter's Mate; Sailmaker's Mate; Armorer; Armorer's Mate; Captain of Hold; Ship's Cook; Ship's Corporal; Cooper; Carpenter; Calkers; Nurses.

The other rates are: Seamen; Ordinary Seamen; Landsmen; Boys, first class; Boys, second class; Boys, third class; Schoolmasters; Ship's Writer; Ship's Printers; Ship's Tailors; Ship's Bakers; Painters, first class; Painters, second class; Cabin Steward; Cabin Cook; Wardroom Steward; Wardroom Cook; Steerage Steward; Steerage Cook; Warrant Officer's Steward; Warrant Officer's Cook; Steward to Commander-in-Chief; Cook to Commander-in-Chief; Coxswain to Commander-in-Chief; Master of the Band; Musicians, first class; Musicians, second class; Bugler.

The Forecastle Men, Topmen and After Guard are composed of Seamen, Ordinary Seamen, Landsmen and boys. The Idlers are those excused from keeping watch.

Besides the Petty Officers, Seamen, Marines, etc., there is on board of every steamer the Engineer's Department, namely: Machinist; Boilermaker; Copper-smith; Engineer's Yeoman; Firemen; Coal-heaver.

In organizing the messes, the men are taken from some parts of the ship and from different watches, so as to facilitate working ship by watches during bad weather.

The Master-at-Arms, Apothecary, Yeomen and Orderly-Sergeant mess together. There are Machinists' messes, Firemen and Coal-heavers' and Marine messes.

To each mess a cook is appointed, whose duty it is to keep the mess-chest and gear clean, attend to preparing the rations for cooking, also for taking up mess things and spreading mess-cloths at the proper hour. When the cook is a permanent one, the mess presents him the ration money.

The mess-cloth is a large, square tarpaulin, made of painted canvas. The cooks spread it ten minutes before meal-hours, when "mess things" are "piped up" by the Boatswain's Mates. The cloth is to shield the deck from grease-spots and dirt. On it are placed the kettles, pans and pots. American sailors, unlike the French and English, prefer the mess-cloth to the swinging tables and benches used by the former nations. There is less danger of rolling to leeward and overturning the grub.

When the watches and messes are organized, the men are stationed at quarters to fight and supply the batteries, and at five quarters to meet the emergency, should it arise. They are then stationed for working ship, manœuvring, handling sails, etc.

To facilitate work in a fleet squadron, or on board of vessels sailing singly, a daily, weekly and monthly routine of duty is prescribed by the Commanding Officer. The monthly or semi-monthly routine consists of days selected for scrubbing hammocks, airing bedding, inspecting and marking clothes, making clothes-bags, and requisitions and of leaving shore. The weekly routine specifies the days for certain drills and exercises, such as: Exercises at quarters, small arms, cutlasses, boats, yards, spars, sails and signals.

The day's routine consists of hour of rising, or "getting up"; of retiring, or "turn in"; "up or down hammocks," according to the weather; cleaning and "washing down decks"; cleaning bright work; sweeping; emptying spittoons; meals; smoking; inspection and muster at quarters, and exercises specified for the day.

Generally the "turn out," or rising, in the morning, is at half-past four in Summer and five o'clock in Winter. Ten minutes before the turn out the Drummers, Fifers, Buglers, the Master-at-Arms and Ship's Corporal, the Boatswain, his mates and "hammock stowers"—men detailed to receive the hammocks and stow them in the netting—are called by the Quarter-master of the Watch and Corporal of the Guard.

As soon as five minutes of the time is reported to the officer of the deck, he commands, "Go on with the music." The Bugler sounds the "reveille," and as the last note expires, the Drummers and Fifers "take up" and continue it. At the third tap a musket is fired, or a gun if on board the flagship. When the music ceases, the Boat-

THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES.—SAILORS STOWING AWAY HAMMOCKS.

swain's shrill call followed by those of his Mates, is heard, and then the order, in chorus, "All hands, up all hammocks"; or, if it is raining, "All hands, down all hammocks." Then the Master-at-Arms and Ship's Corporals are heard "rousing out" the men. "Turn out there!" "Hurry and lash up your hammocks!"

The hammocks are lashed, taken up and handed to the stowers, who place them inclined over each other with numbers out and plainly visible. Ten minutes are allowed for lashing up hammocks.

When the hammocks are up the crew are allowed ten minutes to drink their coffee; then men from different parts of the ship repair to the fore-hatch to strike up the articles needed for cleaning decks, such as buckets, sand, holystones, scrubbing brooms, etc., according to the routine order. If clothes or hammocks are to be scrubbed, it is done before cleaning decks. The clothes or hammocks are spread out on deck, wetted, soaped, and the men, on their knees, scrub them with a brush. When the clothes or hammocks have been well washed, they are secured to clothes-lines, white frocks together, overlapping; then come the white trowsers, blue frocks and blue trowsers. The hammocks are strapped to the hammock gunlines—that is, lines which extend from the bow to the stern of the vessel, or which, at times, are trieed up to the yard-arms, in lieu of along the lower masts.

(To be continued.)

THROUGH THE HEART OF JAPAN.—"'THEY ARE POLITELY URGING HIM TO COMMIT HARA-KIRI,' HE ANSWERED, RISING AND PLACING THE TALL PAPER LANTERNS SO THAT THEY WOULD SHED MORE LIGHT UPON THE CARTOONS."

BIG BRIDGES.

THE immense height of the towers for the support of the Forth bridge, in Scotland, has created surprise, and no wonder, when it is taken into account that when completed they will be the highest buildings of any kind in the world. Science will, therefore, wait with considerable anxiety their completion.

The height of the towers on the island of Inch Garvie, midway between South and North Queensferry, will be 560 feet, to support a bridge 156 feet above high water mark; but the reason for this great altitude is that in the generality of suspension bridges the towers are built on the land on either side of the span, and were this the case in the Forth bridge towers of 150 feet less height, or 430 feet, would be sufficient; but this is impossible from the great length of the bridge.

It seems that by natural laws there is a limit to everything on this earth—that is, that man can go a certain length and no further, as, for instance, in telescopes nothing larger than Lord Rosse's having been perfected for many years. In reference to buildings St. Paul's Cathedral, London, is 460 feet to the top of the dome; St. Peter's, at Rome, 480 feet; the Pyramids of Egypt, at least the great pyramid, is 460 feet, at present in its imperfect state, but by calculation would reach 500 feet in height when finished. When it is remembered that this structure only reaches this height with a base of about twenty-six acres, it would be a very difficult matter to raise the Forth bridge towers to 560 feet with a small base. These towers are to be formed of solid masonry to a certain height, and then by groups of iron pillars girded together in layers upward.

The Niagara suspension bridge has one large span of 821 feet; the railway track above the water is 245 feet, or ninety-five feet higher than the Forth bridge; the towers are only sixty feet high, being built on either side of the shore. The Alleghany bridge has two large spans of 344 feet each, and the towers are forty-five feet high. The Covington and Cincinnati bridge has a span of 1,057 feet; its height above low water is 103 feet, and the towers 230 feet high. The bridge seems to give the best proportion to the Forth bridge, which is 1,680 feet for two spans, 150 feet high, and towers of 560 feet. Those we have mentioned are finished and in working order; and we may mention also the East River bridge, connecting New York to Brooklyn. The towers of this bridge are also built upon the land and are 278 feet high. The single span is 1,596 feet. There is, therefore, no doubt that the Forth bridge, when completed, will be an engineering triumph.

HOW A BRAVE LAD KILLED A PANTHER.

WHILE Mr. W. H. Higgins, living about two and a half miles from Renovo, on the dividing ridge between Paddy's and Drury's runs, was working in his field making hay, he saw an animal in a distant part of the field making off with a hen. He thought it a fox, and called the attention of his son George, a lad of fourteen, to it.

George is fond of hunting, and getting his gun, he started off for the fox, accompanied by his five-year-old brother and a hound. They had not been gone long when Mr. Higgins heard several continuous yells of the most terrible kind. The animal had been treed by the dog, and its half-human shrieks rent the air with terrible distinctness, like the shrill, agonized voice of a woman in dire distress.

The excited father and his field-hands at once made for the point whence came these foreboding sounds, and ere they had reached the spot they met George dragging a huge female panther, measuring five feet one inch in length and standing two feet high. The boys had followed the dog to a big tree, up which the panther had gone about sixty-five feet. When the eldest had saw the animal crouched and glaring above, he felt that it was either to be a dead panther or a death-struggle between it and himself and little brother. He was a good shot generally, but here was to be the severest test his young eye and nerves had ever been put to, and one that might well have tried an older and stouter hunter. He drew a bead and fired, feeling as he did so, he says, as if he had been lifted clear off his feet. But there was the hungry brute yet, crouching on the limb, its eyes fairly lit to burst in their malignant glare. Bang went the gun of our brave young hunter, just as the panther sprang. It seemed, said the lad, as though the animal sprang out from the tree about twenty-five feet, then came straight down, lighting on the dog about sixteen feet from the boys.

The young hunter again thought he had missed. Clubbing his gun, he advanced upon the brute to strike it, but it rolled over dead before he could do so. Examination proved that his first shot had struck about four inches back of the heart, the last one in the heart. It was bravely and well done, and but for the steady nerves and true aim of the lad, he and his little brother would doubtless have fallen victims to the animal's ravenous hunger.

Distinguished Scholars of Brooklyn (N. Y.) Schools.

IRVING G. DAVIS,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 33, HEYWARD STREET, BROOKLYN (E. D.), N. Y.

IRVING G. DAVIS is the promising representative scholar selected at Grammar School No. 33, Heyward Street, Brooklyn (E. D.), N. Y. He was born in Brooklyn, July 21st, 1864, making him fifteen years of age. He is the son of Lewis S. and C. Davis. When five or six years old he entered the Primary Department of one of the Public Schools of Brooklyn, rising to the third class. He then attended the same department of No. 16, and later became a pupil of No. 33, also in the primary branches. When we saw him he had been a scholar in the highest class of the school, the first of the Grammar Department, for two years. His advancement has been by regular promotions, and at all times he gave evidence of a particular and intelligent understanding of the different studies. The Principal of this school, Mr. James Priddy, is a very careful and conscientious instructor, and he has been greatly pleased with the manner in which young Davis has gone on from year to year. He thinks that the youth is now well-founded in all that he has learned, and will make the best use of these studies in the world. Davis has a pleasant face and excellent manners. He has now mastered sufficient book-knowledge to show that he is entirely capable of entering upon any of the more difficult branches of learning.

IRVING G. DAVIS, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 33, HEYWARD STREET, BROOKLYN (E. D.), N. Y.

GEORGE F. BARRETT,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 24, CORNER OF WALL AND BEAVER STREETS, BROOKLYN (E. D.), N. Y.

GEORGE F. BARRETT is a studious pupil selected for this column by the Principal of Grammar School No. 24, corner of Wall and Beaver Streets, Brooklyn (E. D.), N. Y. In making the selection the gentleman stated that he regarded in the boy his standing in the school both in deportment and study. His merits in these particulars were marked, and, while he was associated in his class with other boys of excellent standing, it was not less a fact that he personally deserved this mark of public honor. He deserved to be encouraged for what he had accomplished, and thus inspired for greater efforts toward which his ambition certainly urged him. He was born in Brooklyn, March 23d, 1869, making him in his eleventh year. He is the son of James A. and Jane F. Barrett. He was instructed by his mother, a most intelligent and conscientious lady, until last April a year ago, when he entered the sixth grammar grade of No. 24. He had advanced to the sixth grade when we saw him. He has an intelligent and amiable face, with polite and respectful manners. His home influences are the best, and all that is done in school is seconded while there.

GEORGE F. BARRETT, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 24, CORNER OF WALL AND BEAVER STREETS, BROOKLYN (E. D.), N. Y.

Through the Heart of Japan.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INVENTIVE BEN," "ORVILLE AND DAN," "THE CHUMS AT HARVARD COLLEGE," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

A VISIT TO THE EMPRESS.

ALTHOUGH Johnnie returned to the bath and used a liberal quantity of soap and hot water, the stain grew darker and darker, causing him to look as though he were red-hot.

"I understand," he angrily remarked to his amused chums, who highly enjoyed his discomfiture. "Benkei got that miserable-looking cuss, Nami, to put up this gag on me."

"You are mistaken," said the doctor. "I dare say the man has served us all alike. I guess when you dry yourself the color will vanish."

The indignant young man quitted the bath, and seizing a rough towel, began to polish his face; meanwhile, his companions disrobed, and plunging into the tank-like receptacle, swam, dived and larked, without experiencing any change of complexion.

This made Brackett feel worse than before.

The more he rubbed the redder grew his features, so he retired to his room, muttering:

"I'll call on Mr. Nami and make him give me something to remove this dye. It's strange chums' faces and hands don't turn red. He powdered them same as he did me."

He was unaware that the rose-colored perfumed liquid, in which the boys had, dipped their hands and faces, had neutralized the properties of the Tenga-powder, and changed it into a colorless preparation for the skin.

"Hello, Brack!" demanded Dan, peeping into the room. "Are you all right again—color gone?"

"Confound it, no!" he snapped, as his friends came in, one after the other. "I suppose you fellows think this is a rattling good joke, eh?"

A yell of laughter greeted this speech, and presently Orv said:

"Serves you justly right, old man. You insisted upon his playing you a trick, and deserve all you have got."

"So say I," remarked Don Mortimer. "Johnnie, you must send a sketch of this to the comic papers."

"You go on," growled the victim. "I don't believe it was that Tenga-bloom, anyhow. You are not red, like me. I am afraid I've caught some horrible Japanese disease."

"*The practicalli jokii, vermillienis*?" said Benkei, picking up the last paper given to Brackett by the artist, and dipping it in the hand-bowl. "What have we here?"

He held up the wet sheet by two of its corners, and exhibited the design, a fancy portrait of the red-faced ghoul, Shuten-doji, above the figure being this sentence:

"He used Tenga-bloom for his freckles."

When the doctor translated this the chums roared with merriment, while Johnnie, who was boiling over with rage, dressed himself in full evening costume, and, as he pulled on his white gloves, cried:

"If you think this is funny I don't. It is an outrage upon a guest of the Tenno. I'll call on that idiot, Nami, and give him a bit of my mind. A joke is a joke, but this is downright outrageous fooling."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed his companions.

"My countryman has proved himself more than a match for you at your own game," presently remarked Ben. "You do not for an instant imagine Nami will spoil his own joke, eh? Come, take it like a man, and stay indoors until the stuff wears off. You can't go to the reception as you are."

"If you think you're going to persuade me not to go, so that you will have a chance to propose to Miss Tenga—I mean Miss Tofu—you're mightily mistaken, Ben!" he snapped. "I shall call on Nami and make him remove the color, then join you at the palace. I can do it in time by going on my bicycle."

"I'll bet you ten dollars he won't help you," said Don.

"I'll compel him to!" cried Johnnie. "I'm a guest of the Tenno."

Away he went, and mounting his machine, started for the artist's residence.

"I hope he will not insult Nami," said Dan. "He's as mad as a hornet. Come, boys, let us order our *jin-riki-shas* and dress for our call."

They sent for the vehicles, and as the Japanese clock in the main hall indicated the hour of the Ape, entered their man-drawn carriages, and were swiftly dragged toward the Empress's palace, which they found surrounded with similar conveyances to their own.

On alighting they were received by a chamberlain, who, after welcoming them, conducted the party into a side-room, where they left their boots.

"This way, your excellencies," he said, then, leading them to the entrance of the reception-hall, he shouted, "Professors Fillamore, Mortimer and Sir Benzei Yuzo, of the American Expedition through the Heart of Japan!"

This cry was taken up by the brilliantly-costumed servants, and, thus announced, the chums advanced, until they beheld the Empress Haruko, who, costumed in Japanese court-dress and surrounded by a throng of beautiful ladies, was evidently awaiting their arrival.

They saw Miss Tofu, as we will continue to call her, standing on the left of the Empress, and noticed that no one was seated in the imperial presence.

"Welcome to Nihon," said Her Majesty, smiling sweetly upon her foreign guests.

The four young men advanced, and bent almost to the mats, and Orville replied:

"We thank your Imperial Majesty for this mark of your favor."

With a graceful gesture of her hand she motioned them to advance to the place of honor on her left, and alternately entered into conversation with each; thanking Orville and Dan for defending Benkei at

Harvard. "How did your Majesty hear of that?" asked Orv.

"I read all about it in the *Ke-ya-ki*," she answered. "I was charmed with your class-day speech, and have had it and Doctor Benkei's poem published in a book I have compiled, entitled *Onna Ja-kayo*," ("Woman's Snake Basket"—from the bamboo baskets, containing all sorts of stones used to keep the river banks from falling in.)

The chums enjoyed quite a long talk with their imperial hostess, who spoke English very charmingly.

Orville noticed that, after they were presented, a number of Japanese and foreign ladies and gentlemen had entered the audience-hall, and were waiting to pay their respects to the Empress.

"I am greatly interested in your proposed journey," she observed, "I regretted to hear one of you had been annoyed by a *ronin*. Tell me, is your companion so much injured that he cannot be presented to me? I see there are only four of you present. The Emperor has told me how much Professor Brackett interested him about phrenology. I trust he is coming here later on?"

"I—I am afraid our friend will not be well enough to have the honor of being presented to your Majesty to-day," faltered Orv.

To Benkei's annoyance, Tofu bit her lips, as though sorry at the news, while the Empress continued:

"Before the Mikado left for Kioto, he gave me the bust presented to him by Professor Brackett. If the latter is not able to visit me to-day, I will grant him a private reception before you leave the capital."

"The professor did not sustain any injury at the hands of the *ronin*," remarked Orville. "Your Majesty need not feel any anxiety with regard to him; his indisposition arises from quite a different cause, and is a mere temporary affair."

"I am delighted to hear it," she sweetly observed, bowing twice, in order to show the interview was over. "*Sayonara*!"

The young men again bowed, almost to the mats, then retired, making way for the gentlemen and ladies, who in their turn advanced, saluted the august lady and passed on into the Hall of the Chrysanthemums—a large apartment on the right, where refreshments were served by her maids of honor and other attendants, who, in their turn, thus had an opportunity of receiving their friends.

The young ladies sat round on the *tokonoma* (raised part of the floor, like a low bench along the walls) and gathered their acquaintances about them. Tofu, who quitted the Empress at the same time as the chums, being the observed of all observers, she conversing with the visitors in English.

"Where is Professor Brackett, cousin?" she inquired of Benkei. "The Empress thinks everything of him."

"Yes, confound the fellow!" muttered Ben.

"Eh? What did you say, Yuzo?" she asked. "I think he is just splendid."

She had learned American expressions from the missionary's wife, and spoke exactly like a Northern girl.

"I was talking to myself," said the doctor, who knew his chums were inwardly laughing at him. "The fact is, Cousin Tofu, Brackett has fallen a victim to one of his own kind; has had a trick played upon him by the artist printer, Nami-kawa, and cannot visit you to-day."

Nami was as well known in Tokio as George Francis Train is in New York, so Tofu insisted upon Ben telling her all about it, which he reluctantly proceeded to do.

Leaving him for a while, we will return to Johnnie, who, as he spun through the network of streets surrounding the castle of Oshiro, was saluted with cries of:

"*Hi, no shuten-doji!*" (Look at the red-faced boy, shuten-doji.)

He did not stop to reply, but flew onward, until he arrived at the artist's residence, from which proceeded sounds of merriment, as though Nami were entertaining his friends.

Johnnie sprang off his machine, and resting it against a tree, marched up the main steps of the dwelling and boldly entered the reception-room, where, squatting around trays of food and cups of wine, he beheld Nami-Kawa and his men, who were evidently enjoying a good time, and were unaware of his presence.

"I gave him a nice dose," cried Nami, raising a cup of *saké* aloft. "He shot our countryman, the *ronin*, in the eye, and in return I hit him in the face. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good, good!" shouted the printers, joining in the laughter.

"That is how all the To-jins ought to be served!" exclaimed a bright-eyed "devil," who was filling the wine-cups. "See what a lot an honest boy has got to learn before he can earn his rise in those steam-printing offices. Ah, my master, you ought to have painted the entire crowd!"

"*Hai-hai!*" approvingly from the others.

Nami, who had dropped his mournful tone and resumed his usual merry expression of features, raised his eyes and twitched his mouth comically, and little imagining that he was overheard by his victim, laughingly said:

"Boys, I shot him with his own arrow. He took me for a *baka* (fool), so I proved he was but a poor one. More *saké*, Nambu-shima, my son. Here's long life to us, and may we stick to one another like the Tengu-bloom does to the Tojin's face. Ah, I tricked him nicely."

"You miserable fellow!" cried Johnnie, advancing into the centre of the group. "Change this color, or I will give you something to laugh about."

In an instant all was confusion.

The printers sprang to their feet and glared savagely at him, mad to hear a foreigner threaten their kind friend and employer, but Nami only looked at the intruder and laughed, beginning tauntly, at first, and gradually working up until all but Brackett joined in the "Haw, haw, haw!"

"For two pins I'd strike you!" hissed Johnnie.

"Don't, my friend," gasped the convulsed joker. "Don't. Oh, this is comical. You haven't a freckle on your handsome face now?" then rising, bowed and added: "What can I do for your excellency? Would you like another application of Tengu-bloom?"

"I want you to remove this beastly color from my face," was Brackett's angry response. "You no doubt think you have done a fine thing in thus disfiguring me. I am now going at the Empress's reception, and demand that you restore my complexion to its former state."

"Leave him to me," observed Nami, to his excited people. "You heard what he said? He is in a hurry to attend the reception given by Her Majesty the Empress!" then, turning to his private visitor and bowing ironically, continued in a sarcastic tone: "Certainly, your glorious excellency. I am your slave. I will alter your color. Anything to oblige such a polite *samu*." (Lord.)

He bade one of the men bring him two boxes; then opening the first, told Johnnie to thrust in his hands.

When Brackett withdrew them they were as white as milk.

"Oh, your awful high-and-mightiness," said Nami, offering the second. "Just your face and neck with the preparation in this box?"

Johnnie removed his coat and vest, and dabbed his features with the powder; then glancing in a mirror, sourly remarked:

"All right. I will now forgive your senseless joke. What is that stuff?"

"My lord, you are most merciful," chafed the artist-printer. "That stuff is called *mona-gamita* (a wonderful transformation). We will not detain your awful gorgeousness. *Sai-o-nara*!"

Brackett took a second look in the glass, in order to assure himself that he was once more a white man, then bade the joker good-day, and mounting his bicycle, started for the palace.

CHAPTER XI.

JOHNNIE APOLOGIZES.

ALTHOUGH we may justly pride ourselves upon our wonderful discoveries in the useful arts, the Japanese excel us in those known as the pleasing, amusing and ornamental.

Nami, in whitening Johnnie's face, had shown his mastery over the chemistry of his profession, and while pretending to remove the result of his practical joke, had merely substituted one trick for another.

As Brackett spun along toward the palace he wondered what made people stare, grin and shout derisively at him.

"I suppose they never saw a bicycle before," he thought, little imagining that his face was continually changing color.

Something like it blended over, until it became almost black, then the tint paled, and developed in greenish streaks and spots, which expanded and vanished like a drop of tar on the surface of a pool of water.

The wag, Nami, had taken care to remove all color from his victim's hands, so Johnnie was quite unconscious of the figure he presented.

Upon arriving at the gate of the Imperial residence he dismounted, and leaving the machine in charge of a soldier, ascended the steps of the entrance-hall, when he was accosted by the chamberlain, who bowing, said:

"Where is your excellency's card of invitation?"

At that moment the chemical preparation on Brackett's face had become white again, and as he glanced in a grand mirror that filled up one side of the apartment he saw that he was all right.

"I am Professor John Brackett," he proudly replied. "Owing to a slight accident I have been detained, and was unable to accompany my friends, who are here. I am one of the members of the American Expedition Through the Heart of Japan. Please announce my arrival to the Empress."

"I regret to say the audience is over," answered the official. "Your companions are now in the Hall of the Chrysanthemums. I will herald your entrance," saying which he shouted to the attendant at the door of the apartment referred to, "His Excellency, Professor John Bucket!"

This was duly repeated, the announcement being made just as Benkei was concluding the story of their chum's mishap, which, being delivered in Japanese, had amused all present, even the attendants laughing in their sleeves.

"His Excellency, Professor Shon-buckett!" cried the man at the door, who, not knowing much English, had Japanesed the visitor's name.

"Hush, hush!" murmured Tofu, as a titter ran round the hall; adding, aside to Ben: "Oh, please say something to him, or I shall laugh."

The chums rose, and advancing to Johnnie, conducted him to where the princess was seated on the *tokonoma*, Orville saying:

"Your Royal Highness, here is our missing companion, whom you so much desired to see. Permit me to present Professor John Brackett."

This was said in order to soften the undisguised grins that illuminated the faces of many of the visitors, and the sly, sidelong, amused glances of the court ladies, which were, of course, palpable enough to the newcomer.

"I am most happy to be introduced to such a distinguished scientist," murmured Tofu, as though she had never before met her visitor. "I trust you have not experienced any bad result from your late adventure."

She referred to the *ronin's* attack, a brief statement about which had appeared in the *Daily Kyo-ki*, while he, imagining she meant Nami's practical joke, naively replied:

"Oh, I just called on that printer fellow and made him change the color of my complexion;" added, as he glanced around somewhat angrily at Benkei. "I see some one has told your Royal Highness about it. I wish people would not retail such silly things."

"Indeed, I thought you rather enjoyed practical jokes," merrily remarked Tofu, as she presented him with a cup of tea. "Seat yourself here before me, professor. I want you to tell me about phrenology."

Brackett advanced, and mounting to the *tokonoma*, sank upon its matted surface; then taking the cup from the princess, inquired, in English:

"Princess, how do you like the insignificant gifts I sent you?"

Tofu regarded him with a puzzled air, and glancing coquettishly downward, murmured:

"I have not, as yet, received your valuable presents."

"Why, there is the piano I sent," he remarked, pointing to an instrument in an adjoining room, and smiling triumphantly at Benkei. "I knew that your cousin had forgotten your request, so took the liberty of making up for his lack of thought, and brought you the trifles;" then, beaming admiringly at her, continued: "Ah, princess, give me but one sweet smile as a reward for my poor services."

The young lady, who was really delighted with this evidence of his admiration, raised her silken lashes, in order to thank him with her eyes, when, unfortunately for the romance of the incident, at that moment a bluish tint developed on the centre of Johnnie's nose, and spread like a cloud all over his face, giving him a most comical appearance, and causing her to hide her features behind her sohion (round fan), and to giggle audibly, while the spectators looked on, wondering at her extraordinary behavior.

This annoyed Brackett, and turning to Benkei, who was, like the rest, unaware of his chum's spotted condition, he said, in Japanese: "I'd like to know the cause of the princess's mirth.

As he spoke, they caught sight of his face, and simultaneously burst into shouts of laughter.

"Confound it!" muttered Johnnie to Dan, who, with his other chums, sat behind him. "One would think I was a clown."

"You look like one," panted his friend.

"Oh, I shall die! I shall die!" ejaculated Tofu, in English, as she peeped sideways at her guest's face, "He is blooming like a flower."

That was true enough, the big, black patch having changed to a mixture of various colors, making Brackett look as though his features had been tattooed.

"I—I don't think this is a *laughing* matter," he exclaimed, rising, and angrily confronting the convulsed assembly. "I will return."

"Stay, stay," pleaded Tofu, motioning him to resume his seat. "Let me show you what has amused us."

She gave her maid for a metal mirror, and when it was brought, held it before him and remarked, in a choking voice: "Look at yourself, professor."

Johnnie glanced at the polished disk and at once understood the joke.

The color flickered and changed like the flame of phosphine on the wall of a darkened room, and, spite of his annoyance, he was obliged to smile.

"Never mind, professor," she said, mastering her laughter, that he might not feel offended with her; "you are no worse off than the *Kokushi* (prime councilor) of the late Shogun, who one day visiting Nami-Kawa, was persuaded by the mad artist to take a perfumed bath, and on emerging found himself as black as a negro. Seizing his swords he sent for Nami and ordered him, under penalty of decapitation, to remove the color. Nami, pretending to be very much frightened, quitted the apartment, saying, 'Well and I return,' then went off to Tokio, where the Shogun was staying, and sought out his lord, to whom he exhibited a clever cartoon, making fun of the Shogun's enemies, and of whom he asked that a boon might be granted him.

"Name it," said the Daimio, who hated the Kokushi.

"My lord," replied Nami, "I have played a trick upon the Shogun's chief councilor, and have no way of getting out of the difficulty, having dyed him a jet black that will only wear off with his skin. Never you mind, Nami,' answered the Daimio. 'I will order this admirable sketch to the Shogun and get him to forgive you;' and he succeeded, while the Kokushi, who was as mad as a cat, was compelled to remain in his castle until the dye wore off his face. Had not Nami been smart he would have lost his head. I think he has let you off very easily. The color has now quite left your face."

"I detest a man who indulges in such foolish tricks," said Brackett. "Come, princess, will you not play something for us?"

The attendants wheeled the piano into the saloon, and Tofu, seating herself at the instrument, played, thus affording the audience a great treat.

After the young lady had delighted them for a while, she asked her guests to sing, which they did, rendering some of their college songs very beautifully, and charming their audience, while the empress, who slipped unobserved behind the screen at her attendant's receptions, listened from an adjoining apartment.

It was almost dusk by the time the entertainment was over, and as Tofu shook hands with Brackett, she said, in a low tone:

"I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your thoughtful kindness. Why should you take such an interest in an insignificant person like myself?"

Johnnie's heart beat as he listened, but Benkei was standing too near for him to make a declaration, so he whispered, as he squeezed her hand:

"I'll write you, princess."

A slight pressure of her dimpled fingers showed him she was not angry at his presumption, and he retired in that terrible state known as "heels over head in love."

When they reached the outer hall, and had resumed their shoes and boots, Orville remarked:

"See here, Brack; what did you say to Nami?" Johnnie related the particulars of his interview, then said:

"I am going back to whip that fellow. He nearly spoilt matters between me and Tofu."

"What matters?" said Benkei.

"That is my business!" chuckled Johnnie. "Come along, boys, and see me pay that impertinent rascal for his double-barreled trick!"

"Stop!" cried Orville, grasping him by the arm. "One moment! You will go back to Nami with us!"

"Yes!" nodded Brackett; "of course I will!"

"But you won't be permitted to do anything but beg his pardon!" continued his chum, speaking in a very decisive tone.

"No!" said Johnnie, as though he meant something else. "Who will hinder me?"

"We will!" observed Dan, taking him by the other arm. "You must remember you represent your countrymen, and that to call on a man and bully him, as you did Nami, to-day, is the act of a rowdy, not one of a man educated at Harvard!"

At first Brackett was very indignant; however, he finally saw that he had behaved foolishly, and yielded.

They entered their *jin-rik-shas* and accompanied him back to the artist-printer's, arriving at the latter's house as he sat down to his evening meal.

"Mr. Nami-Kawa," said Johnnie, when they had saluted him, "I have come to express my regret at having behaved so rudely to you this afternoon! In my annoyance at being disfigured, when about to visit her Majesty the Empress, I said what I now deeply regret."

Nami, who, like his victim, was of a most generous disposition, smiled, and, as he shook Johnnie's hand, replied:

"We have an old saying, 'Two of a trade never agree!' I, like yourself, forget myself—permit me to remove the remains of my last trick."

He led Brackett into a room, and, pouring a white liquid into a bowl of water, bade him wash his face, when the spots disappeared for good.

"My friends," he said, "now that our difference has been settled, permit me to offer you some refreshments. I shall then know your anger has vanished like the color off the professor's countenance."

They accepted his hospitable invitation, and, seating themselves on the mats, were presently served with warm tea, rice and stewed fish, *saké* being given to those who drank that beverage.

As they were merrily enjoying the meal, Don Mortimer pointed to a large painting, covering one wall of the apartment, and inquired what it meant.

"That," said their host, "represents 'The Respectful Request of the Forty-seven *Ronins* to Hyde-by-to-morrow (their mothers) (festival). Would you like to go out to the Sengakuji (Spring-hill Temple)? I shall be delighted to show you the way and to explain the various monuments recording the tragedy."

The chums consulted a while, and finally agreed to go, the place being one of the most celebrated in Japan.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HISTORY OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONINS.

"SEE here, chums," said Mortimer, who had risen, and was minutely examining the painting, which represented a crouching Daimio surrounded by angry-looking *ronins*; "suppose we spend the evening with our good friend, Nami, and get him to tell us the story of these heroes?"

"That is a capital idea!" exclaimed Orv. "It is always best to be posted about a place before you visit it. What say you, Mr. Nami—will you oblige us?"

"I am afraid you will fall asleep during the narration," he slyly replied.

"Oh, no!" said Dan. "Do tell us all about it. What are those fierce-looking men saying to the noble?"

"They are politely urging him to perform *hara-kiri*" (suicide by disemboweling), he answered, rising and placing the tall paper-lanterns so that they would shed more light upon the cartoon. "That picture illustrates Yamato Damashi (Spirit of Old Japan). I have painted the immortal Forty-seven in the act of remonstrating with the noble, who is at their mercy. The prominent figure on the right, bowing to the great man, is the leader of the glorious band, and is saying the never-to-be-forgotten words, 'My lord, we humbly ask you to follow his noble example' meaning they wish the Daimio to rip himself open, and let the speaker cut off his head."

"The noble swell doesn't seem to quite see it!" chuckled Brackett, who was vastly amused with the picture. "He is saying, 'Much obliged, my friends; but call again to-morrow, or the day after, or next year. I am not well enough to *hara-kiri* myself to-night.'"

"You are not far away," smilingly answered the artist-printer, who, spite of his admiration for the *ronins's* heroism, saw the comical side of the incident. "This is the history of the noble forty-seven, whose deed has been recorded in golden-characters in our national history, sung by our poets and painted by daubers like myself;" then depositing his pipe on a tray, said: "In a small chapel on the left-hand side of the temple of Senga-kuji, half-buried amid the venerable trees of Takanagawa, is a gilt figure of Kuanoo, and enshrined in the same venerable building you will see the statues of the Forty-seven. The graves of the Daimio, Takumi-no-Kami and his faithful followers, are in the cemetery near by, and close to the chapel, on the hillside, is the well in which the head was washed—the head of Kotsuke-no-Suke, the Daimio who had insulted their lord. I will not weary you by describing the cause of the quarrel between Kotsuke and Takumi, suffice it to say the former insulted the latter in the castle of Oshiro, and Takumi drew his sword and endeavored to cut Kotsuke down. In those days the castle was the palace of the Shogun who ruled Japan, and there was an edict forbidding any one to spill blood within its sacred walls; so Takumi, although a Daimio (great lord), was held a prisoner, tried and sentenced to perform *hara-kiri*, his property being confiscated and his family ruined.

"Such was the law, and, spite of his followers' prayers, it was carried out. Tokumi performed the ceremony and died like a hero, while his retainers became *ronins*, took service with other Daimios, or sank to the low level of merchants."

"Low level of merchants!" cried Johnnie. "In the States, merchants are princes, and look down on soldiers! My father was a dealer in codfish!"

"Your ideas differ from ours," gravely answered their host. "In the old times we had eight classes in Nihon—*Kuge*, Kioto or Mikado's nobility; *Daimios*, Yedo or Shogun's nobility; *Buke*, Samurai of a lower rank than Daimios and bonzes; *Hi-ya-kusho*, landed proprietors, without titles, and farmers; *Shokonin*, artisans; *Akindo*, merchants and shopkeepers; *Hin*, tanners and grave-diggers; and *Hinin* (not human), actors, beggars and thieves. Now, as I was a civilized state of affairs; now all classes are more on a level, and the Etas and Hinin jostle you in the temples!"

"What has that to do with the forty-seven *ronins*?" inquired Mortimer, who was jotting and dashing off his notes, and was, like his companions, much interested in the story.

"Everything!" said Nami, picking up and refilling his pipe. "By my describing the eight classes you will be better able to understand this tale. When Takumi had performed *hara-kiri*, his faithful followers took his corpse out to the Sengakuji (spring-hill Temple) and buried it, with honors, in the little cemetery, reading many prayers and burning much incense before it; after doing which, Oshi Kurano-suke, the dead man's chief councilor, with forty-six others, became *ronins* and formed a league to avenge their master's death.

"This took a long time, as they were compelled to pretend to be satisfied, and dared not say what they intended to do; while, in order to carry out their plan, Oshi abandoned his wife and family and used to get drunk and lie round the streets, so as to deceive the cowardly Daimio, Kotsuke, who had caused the end of his beloved lord.

"One day, when this Oshi was lying drunk in a street in Kioto, a Satsuma Samurai passed, who, knowing him, pointed to the prostrate *ronin* and said: 'is this the Samurai, Oshi Kura-no-Suke, who was a councilor to Asano Takumi-no-Kami? No—it cannot be! Surely such a noble man would not be lying here, like a drunken brute, while the enemy of his dead lord laughs and lives!'

"'Yes,' answered a passer-by, 'that is Oshi! He is always in that condition, and has divorced himself from his wife and children, who are now *Hinnin* (beggars). He is a reproach to the Samurai class, and has done nothing to avenge his lord's death!'

"The Satsuma man grew red when he heard this, he, of course, not knowing that Oshi had thus disgraced himself in order to throw Kotsuke off his guard and to lure him from his hiding-place, so he, in his great indignation, trod on the prostrate man's face and spat upon him, crying:

"'Faithless beast! Fool and craven! You are unworthy of the name of Samurai!'

"Kotsuke's spies witnessed this and reported the affair to their master, who said: 'Now Oshi is drunk all the time, I will quit my retreat. There is no longer anything to be feared from his vengeance!'

"After that he appeared in public and laughed at the advice of his councilors, who told him as long as one of Takumi's men lived his life was in danger.

"Oshi waited patiently; meanwhile, his companions had learned all about Kotsuke's house, and in midwinter, the twelfth month of the year, they secretly returned to Yeddo, and Oshi, after consulting them, planned the attack upon their dead lord's enemy."

(To be continued.)

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Rob Rollalong, the Runaway.

By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG,

AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "DICK LIGHT HEART" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPER X.

A SALE AT AUCTION.

IF Vangs had any heart, it was as hard as iron. If he had any conscience, it had long ago ceased to prick him when he did anything wrong. If he had any mind, it was of a very low order.

He cared for nobody outside of himself, and was the most utterly selfish man that can be conceived.

As he walked along in search of the Widow Elliott's cottage, only two thoughts occupied his attention.

First of all, he thought of pretty Hattie Elliott, and how nice it would be to woo and win her for his wife.

Bad men generally look out for young, fresh, and innocent girls when they want to marry, because they know that if they can once make them love them, their sweet dispositions and generous natures will induce them to put up with all the tyranny and ill-temper that the man whom they have placed over them as lord and master may choose to afflict them with.

Secondly, he thought of money, and every now and then he tapped the inside pocket of his coat to see if the pile of bills was all safe.

"I'll settle down," said Vangs to himself, "if I can make the girl love me. I'll settle down and buy a house and lot on this island. I can smoke and drink and have my little farm, my buggy and my fast trotter. I can go gunning and fishing. What more does a man want? No more sea for me. I've had enough of the sea. Give me a pretty, young wife, and my comforts, and I'm all hunk, you can bet your boots!"

Not one thought did he bestow upon the burning of the *Armadillo*, which he had done nothing whatever to prevent. Not in the least did the outrage he had perpetrated on Rob Rollalong trouble him, and he did not bestow a moment's consideration on the pallid corpse of Captain Spike, which he had just left in the fisherman's house in the village.

At length, following the instructions which had been given him, Vangs came in sight of the cottage in which the Widow Elliott lived. He heard voices raised in altercation as he approached.

A little gray-haired man, with a round, rubicund face, exclaimed to an elderly woman:

"This is final. I have lent you money on your freehold. You cannot pay the interest or the principal. I call in my mortgage, and I will sell you out at auction."

"Mr. Barter," returned the woman, "will you not give me a little further time?"

"No, madam, I will not," replied Mr. Barter, who was a small storekeeper and money-lender at Hogueenot. "I have waited long enough."

"But," said the widow, "I have had a bad season. Usually gentlemen come and board at my house in the Summer for the sake of the fishing."

"I know it."

"This year no one has been down from the city."

"What has that got to do with me?" said Mr. Barter. "I want my money."

"Of course you do, sir," said the widow, meekly.

"And I must have it."

"I cannot give it you. Lord help me! Do you want to turn me out of house and home? What am I and my dear daughter to do?"

"Do what other people do when they get into difficulties."

"What's that, sir?"

"Do the best you can. I can't support you," said Mr. Barter.

"Did I ask you, sir?"

"It comes to the same thing. I am kept out of my money, and I can't afford it. This day week I sell," said Mr. Barter, "and that's final. Don't say another word. That settles it. It's no use crying and making a fuss. I've had that played on me before. Good-day. Bring me the money I have lent you and the interest, and then I can talk to you. Unless you do that you're gone up, and it's no use talking."

The widow raised her handkerchief to her eyes and shed bitter tears.

She had fallen into difficulties lately, and saw the home to which her husband had taken her on her marriage, and where her child was born, and where she had lived so happily, about to be taken from her.

In an evil moment she had borrowed a small sum from Mr. Barter, giving him a mortgage on her property, and he, with the instinct of a vampire, had determined to take advantage of the widow's misfortunes to make her property his own.

The law allowed him to do so, and why should he not? Vangs listened to this conversation with great interest.

He had plenty of money in his pocket—why should he not buy the house and lot which belonged to the Widow Elliott?

It would make him her landlord.

More than this, it would give him power over her, and he would be better able to prosecute his design on the hand and heart of Hattie.

"I'll buy that house," he said to himself.

As Mr. Barter was walking away from the widow, Vangs stopped him.

"Beg pardon," he said. "Can I have a word with you?"

"A hundred, if you like," replied Barter.

"I understand you have a mortgage on the Widow Elliott's house?"

"That's so?"

"You wish to close?"

"I do."

"I'm a buyer, if the terms will suit."

"What will you give?" asked Mr. Barter, his eyes twinkling with delight.

Real estate was not in request on Staten Island just then, and Barter would rather have had the value of the house than the property itself, for he knew where he could always get a good percentage for his money.

"It's for you to name the price," replied Vangs.

"You observe how beautifully it's situated on the edge of a wood?" said Barter.

"Just right for chills and fever," answered Vangs.

"What?"

"In the right place for the ague."

"Oh, pshaw! That's nothing, when you're used to it. What will you give?"

"All it's worth."

"What's that?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"It's yours," said Barter, eagerly, for he had not expected so much. "What's your name?"

"Vangs."

"Come to my house, Mr. Vangs, and I'll fix everything."

"Not now," replied Vangs. "Do your law business first, and when you can give me a title, come to me and I'll pay you C. O. D."

"Where shall I find you?"

"At the widow's. I'm going to board there. Come down for some fishing."

"Good enough," said Mr. Barter. "We understand one another."

"Perfectly."

"By-the-way," continued Barter, "are you buying property here?"

"What do you mean?"

"Do you want a house to live in? I've got a perfect gem the other side of the wood. Belonged to Briggs; his wife died there, and he's gone to Europe. Ten acres of land—half wood, half garden and pasture. Pretty little house; frame. Only five thousand dollars for the whole."

Vangs reflected for a moment.

If he bought the cottage and the house it would exhaust half his money; but, at the same time, the investment was just what he was looking for.

"I think I can trade with you," he replied. "Come to me, as I said, and if I like the house I'll buy it, as well as the widow's."

"Good-day, Mr. Vangs. I'll hurry things up," said Barter.

Vangs nodded and passed on toward the cottage, very well satisfied with the chance which luck had placed in his way. Mrs. Elliott was still weeping.

She had sunk upon the trunk of a fallen tree in front of her prettily-built wooden house, which was embowered in a thick wood, and the tears trickled down her wrinkled cheeks.

It was hard at her age to be turned out of her house, to lose her home and to go forth into the wide world, at the mercy of strangers.

At this moment Hattie came tripping toward her from the wood, carrying in her hand a bundle of wild flowers which she had gathered.

"What has happened, mamma?" she exclaimed, in a tone of concern.

"Nothing, daughter," replied Mrs. Elliott, who charitably wished to keep her trouble to herself.

"You are crying."

"I had a chill, my dear, and——"

"Don't try to tell me that, mamma," said Hattie, interrupting her. "I'm sure Mr. Barter has said something unkind. Didn't I think as much when he came up, looking as cold as ice and hard as iron, and you sent me into the wood to pick flowers? It was only done to get rid of me, so that I mightn't hear what was said."

"Ah, well, my child!" said Mrs. Elliott, "I may as well tell you first as last. We've got to leave."

"Leave the cottage?"

"Yes."

"What for, mamma?"

"Barter says so," replied Mrs. Elliott, sorrowfully.

"Can he do it?" asked Hattie, her eyes flashing indignantly.

"Yes. He's got the law with him."

"How?"

"He lent me money on my house. I've been pinched for food sometimes, Hattie, though you didn't know it. Gradually the money your father had put in the bank has been spent. When the Briggses were at the wood-house, I made something by washing and dressmaking. Since they have been gone, things have been worse than ever."

"So we've got to go?" said Hattie. "I'll give Mr. Barter a bit of my mind the next time he comes up here; and what are we going to do, mamma?"

"God only knows, my dear."

"Where are we to go?"

"The workhouse on the island, I fear."

Hattie's cheeks blanched at the bare mention of such a thing.

"Never, mother, never!" she said. "I'll work my fingers to the bone first."

"What can you do, my poor dear!" said Mrs. Elliott, adding: "Hush! I see a gentleman coming this way. Perhaps he wants board. If I could only get a little money to give Barter, he might——"

She broke off abruptly as Vangs approached.

"Is this Mrs. Elliott's?" he asked, in as polite a manner as he could assume.

"That's my name sir. What's your pleasure?"

"I am in search of board," said Vangs.

"Oh, mamma," said Hattie, "that's the gentleman I saw on the beach."

"Very well, my dear," said her mother. "We will do our best for him. I'll get a room for you to sleep in, sir; and if a fowl and a cup of tea will do for your supper, it will be ready in an hour. I charge two and a half a day, find fishing tackle, and have a boat on the shore."

"Thank you," replied Vangs. "I am entirely in your hands: do the best you can for me. I shall stay here a fortnight."

He lighted his pipe, while Mrs. Elliott hurried away to make her preparations for the new boarder.

Hattie remained, and Vangs looked more admiringly at her than he had done before.

"So," he exclaimed, "your house will soon be to let?"

"Yes, sir," replied Hattie.

"Are you to be let with it?"

"No. I'm to be let alone," she answered.

Vangs bit his lips at the witty retort.

"The girl's as smart as she's pretty," he said to himself.

After a pause, he said:

"What sort of a house is the one Mr. Briggs owns?"

"The Dell House in the wood? Oh, it's an awful place."

"Why?"

"Because it's haunted."

"Nonsense! You don't believe in such rubbish as that, do you?" said Vangs, with a smile.

"I know I wouldn't go within a hundred yards of it after dark. Hasn't it been empty ever since Mrs. Briggs was mur—I mean's say that, though—since Mrs. Briggs died?"

Vangs was becoming interested in the description of his intended purchase.

He didn't believe in haunted houses, but he thought it would be a good excuse for getting the property cheap.

"What sort of a man was Briggs?" he asked.

Hattie was about to reply, when a voice from behind exclaimed:

"Just such another as you."

Vangs looked around and saw the half-witted boy whom they called Soft Tommy.

"What are you doing here, Tommy?" said Hattie.

"I've as much right around as any one else," replied the boy.

"But you mustn't be rude to the gentleman."

"He's like Briggs, he is. Briggs killed his wife. Didn't I see him do it?" said Tommy: "and didn't this chap kill his friend in the water with a stone? Perhaps I didn't see that, too."

"Oh, Tommy, what a dreadful thing to say! You must fancy these horrors."

"No, I don't, either. My head's level enough, though I do have my queer times."

Vangs looked at Hattie, and tapped his forehead significantly.

Hattie nodded, as if she caught his meaning, and entirely agreed with him that the boy was gone in his upper story.

"Poor fellow," said Vangs; "what a pity he's like that! Is he dangerous?"

"Oh, no; Tommy's harmless enough. We all like Tommy."

"Come here, boy. I have a quarter for you," said Vangs, in a mild tone.

"You can keep it," answered Tommy. "I'm poor, but if I was starving I wouldn't take a cent off of you."

"Why not?"

"Didn't I see you rob the dead man? I've got his ghost now."

"Oh, you have? Very well. I must speak to the village policeman about this. It seems to me you know how to steal what don't belong to you in spite of your pretended innocence."

"They are where you can't find them, nor nobody else," replied the boy.

"Be off, you young loafer," said Vangs, losing his temper. "I'll have no more of your nonsense, and if you don't skip lively, I'll see if a stout stick can't help you; and, what's more, you'd best keep out of my sight, for if you cross my path, and give me any of your impudence, I'll whale you within an inch of your life."

"You daren't touch me," replied Tommy, coming close up to him, in a defiant manner.

"Don't be foolish," said Hattie. "Go away. The gentleman will hit you if you anger him."

"He dare't. I tell you he's a bad man, and killed his pal. I'll swear to it, if he so much as raises his little finger to me."

Vangs felt like hitting him, but he restrained himself, thinking it would not be prudent to excite the boy, who, by his prattle, might make people talk, which would be unpleasant in a village where he meant to reside and become one of the leading men.

"Go along; you're a foolish boy," he said.

"There?" exclaimed Tommy, triumphantly; "what did I tell you? He daren't do it."

"I've a good mind to box your ears myself," said Hattie. "The gentleman's too good for you."

"Oh, you've got to like him already," said Tommy, tauntingly. "Going to have him for your fellow—eh, Hattie?"

The girl blushed up to her temples.

"Don't get red over it," continued Tommy. "The chap ain't bad-looking; but see to it as he don't murder you, too, when he gets tired of you."

This remark showed that Tommy's powers of perception were keen enough, for, in spite of Vangs's wild and cruel disposition, he was gifted with a certain handsome air of the Byronic, pirate type, bold and rugged, which is eminently calculated to captivate a girl in her teens.

The impertinence of the observation, however, was rather more than Hattie could bear.

She raised her hand to strike the boy, but he was too quick for her, and bounded away like a deer.

"Ha, ha, ha!" rang his clear voice, on the skirts of the wood. "I'm going to the haunted house. If you want me, you'll find me there. I'm not afraid of ghosts. They never harm Tommy. I see 'em every day, and we're quite friendly. Ho, ho, ho! There'll be another ghost there to-night. The man he killed will be there, sure as eggs is eggs, and such a clanking of chains we shall have! Ha, ha, ha!"

His elfin laughter was heard in the wood long after he disappeared in its sombre recesses, and neither Hattie nor Mr. Vangs could repress a shudder of horror.

"In what direction does the Dell House lie?" asked Vangs.

"It's only a quarter of a mile off through the wood, sir," replied Hattie.

"Do you know the way?"

"Oh, yes; I've been there hundreds of times—thousands, I may say."

"Is there a path through the wood?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will take a walk there while your mother is getting my supper ready. You, I guess, can't be spared to show me the way?"

"I'll go, if you say so, sir," replied Hattie.

"I shall be glad of you as a guide, and glad of your society, too," said Vangs.

Hattie cried out: "Mother!"

"What is it?" answered a voice from the depth of the cottage.

"The gentleman wants to see the Dell House. Can I show him where it is?"

"Anywhere you go," replied Mrs. Elliott.

"Come along, sir," said Hattie, who started off at a quick pace along a narrow path which ran through the wood.

She kept ahead of Vangs all the way, and at length conducted him to a spot which was elevated above the surrounding country. On this slight eminence a small frame-house was built. It was nicely shaded by maples and the oleanthus, while Virginia creepers and vines ran all over it. A prettier and less ghostlike-looking spot as Vangs saw it in the light of the setting sun, could not be imagined.

The ground around it had been laid out in gardenbeds for flowers, and pretty shrubs were planted all around; but rank weeds sprang up among the flowers, and the shrubs had a wild, neglected appearance.

"Not much like ghosts," said Vangs.

"Oh, but there are ghosts," replied Hattie, quickly.

"How do you know?"

"I've seen them."

"You fancied you did, eh?"

"Maybe; though I am not one of the fancying kind."

"How would you like to live here, child?" said Vangs.

"You couldn't hire me to, sir."

"Why not?"

"I'd be afraid."

"Of what?"

"Ghosts."

Vangs laughed.

"Now, suppose," he said, "that you were to marry some man you loved, and he'd bought this place, and he wasn't afraid, and he said to you, 'Come and live with me here, and we'll have your mother along,' would you have any fear then?"

"Not if I was married, sir, and my husband was with me, because I should know that whatever chanced he would protect me."

"I'm going to buy that place, Miss Hattie," said Vangs.

He looked steadily into her eyes as he spoke, and she dropped hers with a flush.

It was clear that she understood him.

"She is mine," said Vangs to himself. "It is only a question of time. My luck's changed, and I'm going to propose now. Own my own houses and lots, and have just such a wife as I have dreamed of all my life."

Suddenly the shades of several of the windows were banged outward, closing again as if agitated by the wind.

Strange cries were heard in the house, and the clanking of chains was distinctly audible.

"Oh, sir!" cried Hattie, shrinking up to Vangs and seizing his arm.

"What are you afraid of, child?" he asked.

"Did you not see and hear?"

"What of it?"

"Oh! I am so frightened! The ghosts! I shall not sleep all night," said Hattie.

"You're a very foolish little girl, that's all I can say," answered Vangs. "There is not a breath of air stirring; therefore, those shades must have been opened by some one inside, and as Master Tommy said he was going up here, I more than suspect him of the tomfoolery."

"Oh, no, it wasn't Tommy. It was more than that boy. I know it was the ghosts."

"Oh, pshaw!" said Vangs, impatiently. "We will soon settle this."

He walked to the door of the house.

"It's locked, sir," said Hattie. "Mr. Barter has the keys."

Vangs tried the front door, and found what she said to be correct.

His next attempt was on a window by the side of the stoop.

He flung back the shades, and, without difficulty, opened the window, which was not bolted.

"As I thought," he said, as he sprang into an empty room. "If I catch that boy I'll well him, you can bet your bottom dollar."

He went from room to room on the basement and then up-stairs, exploring the whole house, but he could see no one and hear nothing.

The silence of the grave reigned in the deserted and empty house.

Baffled and annoyed, he returned to the window at which he had entered.

To his surprise, it was shut down and bolted.

He knew he had left it open, and, with a curse, he threw it up and stepped out on the lawn.

No sooner had he done so than the same unearthly clatter was heard at the top of the house.

Chains clanked.

Elfin laughter resounded.

The windows were opened and shut, and the shades banged backward and forward.

Hattie was as white as a sheet.

Vangs was no coward, but even he felt the uneasy feeling creeping over him again, and he was rather glad than otherwise to quit the house.

"Did you see anything?" asked Hattie.

"Nothing at all," replied Vangs.

"But you hear those noises?"

"I do."

"Was I not right?"

"I'll be hanged if I know what to think," said Vangs, "and I'll solve this mystery before long. Come away, now. Your mother will be having supper ready, and I don't see that there is anything to be gained by waiting."

Hattie was only too glad to leave the questionable spot, and she led the way back with an alacrity which showed how her feelings were placed at that moment.

Vangs strode after her, irritated and perplexed.

He did not like to admit that he was wrong, because he still believed he was right, though what had occurred forced him to admit to himself that there was a certain amount of mystery about the haunted house which he could not explain.

At the same time he believed Tommy to be at the bottom of the whole affair, and resolved in his mind to return early to the Dell House when he had plenty of time to spare, and thoroughly explore the place from garret to basement, from coal-cellar to closet.

Returning to the Widow Elliott's cottage, he found supper prepared for him.

After doing justice to it, he engaged in conversation with the mother and daughter, smoked his pipe, and asked a variety of questions about the neighborhood.

A week passed.

At the expiration of that time the purchase of the cottage and the Dell House was completed, and Mr. Barter gave the deeds of the property to Vangs, who became absolute owner.

One day Mrs. Elliott had been to the village, and she had called upon Barter, to know what he was going to do with her, learning to her astonishment that the gentleman who lodged in her house was her landlord.

She rushed home to tell her daughter the news.

Vangs was absent.

The inquest on Spike had found that he was accidentally drowned while bathing, and that day had been selected for his funeral. Vangs generously paying the expenses, which gave the people some idea of the nobility of his nature, and his open-hearted disposition.

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Hattie, as she saw her mother, "I've got such news for you!"

"And so have I for you, child!" replied Mrs. Elliott.

"Yours can't match mine."

"Can't it, indeed? What do you say to Barter selling our property?"

"Has he done that?"

"Yes, indeed!"

"It's a shame, mother! but it's no more than what he said he'd do."

"Who do you think has bought it, Hattie?"

"Can't tell," replied the girl.

"Mr. Vangs, the gentleman who boards with us."

"Never!"

"It's true."

"Good land!" exclaimed Hattie, "what strange things do come about! Well, he's better than Barter, anyway, for I'm sure he won't turn us out."

"How can you be sure of it, Hattie?"

"Oh, I can generally tell people's dispositions after knowing them a short time. But say, mother, what do you think my news is? Three van-loads of furniture have come in for the Dell House, and the men are fixing it up fine."

"Is it let?"

"It's sold," replied Hattie. "They say Mr. Vangs is doing it all, and he's going to live at the Dell House. And now, mother, I know what he meant by asking me——"

She hesitated, and broke off abruptly.

"By asking you what, child?" queried her mother.

"If I should mind living there if I was married, and could have my mother along with me? We're all right, mamma. He won't turn us out. Things have taken a turn."

"Well, I'm glad of that," exclaimed Mrs. Elliott, "for my mind has been in a sad state lately. Mr. Vangs told me he was going away to-day, but he didn't say where."

"He's going to sleep in the Dell House to-night, mamma. He's got an old man for gardener and coachman, and his wife to fix for him. They're making up a bedroom now. That's where he's going to if he leaves us to-night."

"Bless the Lord!" exclaimed Mrs. Elliott, piously. "We never ought to despair."

"That's so, mother. While we live we can hope."

"Well, child, hurry up and make the fire in the stove. Maybe Mr. Vangs will take some supper, and it's as well to have the kettle boiled."

But at this moment two boys appeared on the scene.

One was Rob Rollalong and the other Kedge Anchor.

After leaving Hen Arlick, they crossed the bay, reached the island, and slept in the woods all night, tramping leisurely to Hogtsenot the next day.

"Hey, auntie!" exclaimed Hob; "don't you know me?"

"Why, bless me if it isn't Rob! Where have you been, Rob, all this time that you've never been to see me or Hattie?"

"Been to sea, auntie. This is my friend Kedge also a sailor."

"Well, well, boys will be boys. Come in and have some supper. I'm glad to see you, Rob, and your friend, too. Hattie's just after lighting the fire."

Rob walked up to Hattie, who coldly gave him her hand.

He attempted to kiss her, as he had done before without any difficulty; but she pushed him gently away, as an indication that she resented such familiarities, and could not allow them any longer.

"You don't seem glad to see me, Hattie," exclaimed Rob, who was much pained.

"Oh, yes, I am, she answered, carelessly.

"What changed you so in a few months?"

"Am I changed?"

"I think so. What's done it?"

"Nothing. It's your fancy, I guess," she replied, as she entered the house to attend to her domestic duties.

Rob shook his head.

"There is something wrong here," he muttered. "I never saw Hattie act so before."

He sat down on a bench and lighted his pipe, Kedge following his example.

His reception from Hattie was very different from what he had expected.

He fancied that she might have heard some exaggerated report of his escapade at Amboy, which resulted in his going to sea, and was annoyed at it.

At that time he had no suspicion that Vangs, first officer of the lost *Armadillo*, was at the bottom of the whole affair. It happened, however, that he had not long to wait, for Vangs was even then hurrying back from the funeral of the late Captain Spike, who was so unfortunately drowned while bathing.

[To be continued.]

"Rob Rollalong" was commenced in No. 672.

Young Pickwick's Schooldays.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE COUNTRY FAIR—THE DIDDLER HAS A BRILLIANT IDEA, AND BECOMES THE PROPRIETOR OF A FINE ARTS EXHIBITION AND A MOVING WAXWORK.

DOCTOR WADDLE'S pupils were in a state of considerable excitement on account of a fair which was to be held about a mile from the school.

Every one was anxious to go, and they all came hurrying to the Diddler with the news.

"There's going to be a fair, something good this time, not at all like the last fair, and we must all go!" they exclaimed, tumultuously.

To their great surprise the Diddler, who was usually the leader in all their plans and projects, was silent.

The fact was, his funds were just at that time very low, and his fertile brain had conceived an idea that the forthcoming fair might be made a source of considerable profit to himself.

His companions mistook the cause of his abstraction, and Fitzsham said to him:

"I say, old fellow, you don't seem to care much about this fair?"

"Oh, yes, my boy—like idea—extremely—jolly place—go, by all means—but——"

"What?"

"I'm thinking," observed the Diddler, touching his forehead; "plan here—brilliant idea—must consider—settle it all in a few minutes—don't be in a hurry, dear boys."

"We must ask the doctor, I suppose," said young Pickwick.

"No—think not—be night object—that awkward—so take French leave—best way—can't be stopped then."

"Go without asking, eh?"

"Precisely, dear boys—all agree—that's right."

Swags, who dozed on ginger-nuts, which he was informed were scattered gratuitously on this occasion in all directions, was in raptures, and longed for the day to arrive.

The grand fair was not to take place for nearly a week, and during the interim the Diddler was frequently missing during the play-hours.

This circumstance appeared to his comrades rather mysterious, and they made frequent and curious inquiries as to the cause of his absence.

The Diddler evaded them.

"All right," my boys, he said to them, with a knowing wink of his peculiar eye; "wait a bit—know all presently—we may be happy yet—and so on."

This was all they could get out of him.

At length the all-important day came.

The boys begged for a whole holiday, which the doctor granted.

They were supposed to go for a ramble in the country, instead of which they, of course, proceeded to the fair. They arrived early.

The swings, roundabouts and shows were there; the stalls glistened with gilded toys, and groaned under the weight of gingerbread, but not many visitors had as yet arrived.

The cheap jacks were only just arranging their wares, and the red salesmander, who was supposed to live upon blazing tow, was quietly eating his breakfast of beefsteak and onions.

Swags's first act was to rush to the nearest stall and order an unlimited quantity of ginger-nuts.

He was served at once, and was going off without paying, when the owner of the stall caught him by the collar and detained him.

"I want two shillin' o' you," he said.

"What for?" asked Swags.

"For the nuts, o' course."

"Get out. I was told by Diddler that you gave 'em away for nothing," said Swags, ruefully.

"Oh, ah, that's a likely chance!" grinned the proprietor; "come on, out with the two shillings or drop the nuts."

Swags would rather have perished on the spot than do the latter, and so he handed the man the money; and carried off his bag of ginger-nuts in triumph. His companions crowded round him.

"You've well provided, Swaggy," remarked young Pickwick.

"He's going to share them amongst us," said Tinkle.

"No, I ain't," returned Swags, hugging the brown-paper bag closely to him; "I'm hungry, and I've only bought enough for myself."

"Ho, ho, ho!" laughed his schoolfellows. "What a gormand!"

"You don't mean to say you're going to devour all that lot?" said Dick Sancliff. "You'll burst, old man."

"No, I shan't; ginger-nuts agrees with me. I could eat a houseful."

"Well, it looks greedy to eat so much," said Tuppy. "Besides, you have ginger hair."

"I don't mind having ginger hair, and I don't mind how it looks," returned Swags. "Don't bother me, but leave me to enjoy my nuts in peace. Go away, all of you."

"He'll kill himself, to a certainty," said the Hon. Fitzsham, seriously, "and we really can't allow that—on fair day, too—can we?"

"No; it would be very unfair," responded Pickwick.

"You go and buy me some more; I shan't kill myself," said Swags, fretfully.

"No; he shan't," echoed young Pickwick; "we must avert such a dreadful catastrophe!"

As he spoke he ripped up the side of the bag with his pocket-knife.

If Swags had been ripped up himself he could not utter a more doleful howl, as the gingernuts poured out in a shower on the ground.

There was a general scramble for the luxuries.

The stout owner scrambled, too, with all his energies, but not very successfully.

Every time he stooped, some one gave him a push and shot him far out beyond the mark on his hands and knees.

When all was over, Swags found himself the possessor of two nuts only and the paper bag.

"It's a shame!—a rascally shame!" he cried, shedding bitter tears; "and so hungry as I am, too! You ought to be ashamed o' yerselves, you ought."

His ruthless despoilers only laughed, and the Diddler, who had stood aloof and taken no part in the fun, having evidently something more important on his mind, said, presently:

"Now, then, boys, who's coming?"

"Hurrah—all!" they replied.

"Where are we going to?" asked Bully Mungal, in no very amiable tone.

"See when you get there!" was the Diddler's rejoinder, as he walked briskly away.

The rest followed, until at length he stopped before a narrow kind of booth made of wood and canvas.

Over the entrance was a board, on which was painted, in distinct characters:

FINE ARTS EXHIBITION.
AMUSING AND INSTRUCTIVE.

Every one should see the rare specimens collected with much labor and research by the proprietor—S. WINDLER.

N. B.—These valuable relics of art, having been obtained from various sources, must positively be removed immediately upon the closing of this bazar. Be in time! Be in time!

Admission, Threpence.

The boys read this announcement and then asked:

"What is it?"

"Dear boys, a little dodge on my part," returned the Diddler, with one of his most expressive winks.

"Anything inside?" inquired young Pickwick.

"Rather," the Diddler replied. "Many choice and beautiful things."

"Pictures, I suppose?" said Jonadab Fitzsham. The knowing one grinned as he said:

"Come in and see."

"I don't see the fun of paying threepence for this," grumbled the surly Mungal.

"There isn't room to swing a cat here," growled Mungal.

"This is a fine art exhibition, sir," exclaimed the Diddler, sternly; "not to swing cats in."

"But where's the fine arts?" inquired Tinkle, with a grin, as he looked round at the empty booth. "I've wiped my eyes carefully, but I can't see 'em."

"Will presently, old sco," returned the Diddler. "Not hung up yet."

"Where do you keep them?" asked Mossy Morton.

"Here."

"What, in that small box?"

"Yes—very valuable collection—assure you—make their appearances by-and-by."

Mossy and his satellite sneered, saying:

"Expect you have not got much in that there box."

But the Diddler took not the slightest notice. He only said:

"This is exhibition number one, to be seen soon; then for number two."

"What! Have you got any more?" asked his astonished schoolmates.

"Decidedly," answered the Diddler, with a beaming smile and a roll of his swivel eye; "one far superior—follow me—grand moving waxworks—wonder of age."

With his comrades at his heels, lost in amazement, the Diddler strode along until he paused before a canvas booth considerably larger than the other.

The decorations without were of a more showy and inviting description, and the announcement was painted in glaring red letters:

"DUNN BROWN'S
Unrivaled and Unique
Collection of
MOVING WAX
FIGURES,
Large as Life and Twice as Natural.
ADMISSION, SIXPENCE."

"That—something like—eh?" exclaimed the Diddler, after allowing his companions time to take it all in.

"Very good, indeed!" they cried, assentingly. "Can't we go inside?"

"Certainly—Dunn Brown admits you—free—gratis—enter."

He opened the door, and they went in.

The interior was very fairly fitted up, and hung with drapery of a deep-red color.

There was a raised platform about four feet from the ground, which extended along the walls on each side, and this was divided into two compartments for the reception of the wax-figures.

The floor was covered with a strip of black felt.

Altogether, it had an imposing effect.

There was only one thing wanting to make the thing complete, and that was the figures themselves.

This was presently noticed, and young Pickwick said:

"Where are the waxworks?"

"Here, dear boy," replied the Diddler, rolling his eye round upon his companions.

"You don't mean us, do you?" asked Pickwick.

The Diddler smiled one of his irresistible smiles, and nodded.

There was a slight murmur and a subdued growl from Bully Mungal at this announcement, and Swags remarked, stolidly:

"I can't turn myself into a wax image!"

"Nonsense, Swaggy," laughed the Diddler, good-humoredly; "no occasion to turn—image already—more fat one—melt down to a big lump."

"And do you really mean that we are to be the moving figures, and have some fun?" inquired young Pickwick.

"Yes, of course," replied the Diddler, with much animation. "You are figures, ain't you? And I know you have got some fun in you."

"Well, yes."

"And you move, don't you?"

"Certainly."

"Very good—there you are, then—moving figures—all ready to hand—just the ticket."

"But we ain't wax," drawled out the fat boy again.

"Ought to be, then, by this time—get plenty thwacks from Doctor Waddle," grinned the Diddler.

The boys joined in the laugh, and the Diddler continued, glowingly:

"Dress you all up—magnificent costumes—correct—period—and so on. Now, dear boys."

The idea seemed to please the boys, and they began to enter into the Diddler's scheme as likely to afford a great deal of fun.

"But where are you going to get the dresses?" asked Fitzsham.

"Theatre over yonder—arranged with manager—borrowed wardrobe—heavy expense—all set that."

"I've no objection to take a part," said Jonadab, "since you have costumes."

"Nor II nor I! nor I!" echoed the rest.

"Then you all consent to go in for the little game?" said the Diddler.

"Yes, all."

"There's only one thing puzzles me," remarked young Pickwick.

"What's that?" asked the knowing one.

"I can't understand how you managed to get these buildings put up. They must have cost you a lot of money," said Tuppy.

"Not a copper I know—confiding builder—promissory note—long time after date—promise to pay—heavy interest—when he gets it—and that sort of thing, you know."

ROB ROLLALONG, THE RUNAWAY.—"SUDDENLY THE SHADES OF SEVERAL OF THE WINDOWS WERE RANGED OUTWARD, AS IF AGITATED BY THE WIND."—SEE PAGE 171.

YOUNG PICKWICK'S SCHOOLDAYS.—"SWAGS RAISED HIS HAND TILL THE THUMB TOUCHED HIS NOSE."

The boys laughed at their voluble comrade, who then said:

"Now, then, come with me—theatre—select costumes, et ceters—*tempus fugit*—quick movement, boys."

A few seconds' rapid walking brought them to a show, over which was written, in colossal letters:

"JINKS'S DRAMATIC TEMPLE."

"Here we are," said the Diddler, as he ran up the steps and knocked at the door above.

It was immediately opened by the manager himself, a gray-haired man with a red nose.

"Ah, Jinks, my boy—here we are!" exclaimed the Diddler, in a tone of much exhilaration; "come to look at dresses; got 'em ready?"

"I've hooked 'em out," responded Mr. Jinks, "and you must select what you require."

"Just so—walk up, boys," he called to his companions, who, instead of walking, ran up the steps at full speed, and pressed in at the door eagerly.

A few steps within and they stood on the stage, which was strewn with stage costumes of all descriptions.

In the daylight they had a somewhat faded and dingy look, the lace and spangles being much frayed and tarnished.

"What a miserable lot of old rags!" remarked Pickwick to Dick Sanciff.

"Not fit to put on the back of a chimney-sweep," joined in Bully Mungat.

The Diddler probed the latter with a piercing glance from his swivel eye, and silenced him.

Then turning to Dick, he said:

"Stage dresses never much in daytime—gas light—quite different—sparkle—glitter—dazzling the eyesight."

It took some time to select the dresses for the various characters.

But at length this was accomplished, and they were packed in a box with a variety of wigs and brands, and Tim Carroll, the manager's Jack-of-all-work, was summoned to carry them to the wax-work emporium.

On arriving there, the Diddler gave Tim a list of the characters, and requested him to get the *corps dramatique* attired in their proper costumes by the time he returned.

This the Irishman undertaking to perform, the Diddler hurried away to his fine arts exhibition.

CHAPTER XLII.

DOCTOR WADDLE AND HIS USHER VISIT THE FINE ARTS EXHIBITION, WHICH DOES NOT PROVE AT ALL SATISFACTORY—THE RELICS OF ANCIENT GREECE BRING ABOUT A VERY GREAT RESULT.

A SLIGHT crowd of a dozen persons were assembled, waiting for admission, and having quickly arranged the works of art, he put on a long black coat and a white cravat, with a skull-cap and a pair of spectacles, which quite destroyed his identity, and opened the door.

The visitors were of the more respectable class, and the Diddler chuckled inwardly as the three-pences dropped into his hand.

He was mentally calculating the receipts, when a familiar voice caused him to look round.

Doctor Waddle, with Mr. Puckle, the usher, stood a few yards from him, the eyes of the former being fixed on the printed announcement on the outside.

"Oh, yes, Puckle," he said, after a moment; "this is evidently an exhibition of a superior class, as the words 'fine arts' intimate."

"I have no doubt you are perfectly right, sir," returned Mr. Puckle; "it only struck me that the price of admission was rather low. It is usually a shilling to visit a fine art gallery."

"Not at fair times, Puckle; not at fair times," said the doctor, sharply. "At all events, I shall go in; I'm a great admirer of pictures and other works of art." Accordingly, they paid their money, and in they went, the doctor calling the usher's attention to the highly artistic appearance of the money-taker as they passed through.

At this juncture, who should stroll up but Mr. Brownrigg and his friend Miffins.

"Hallos!" exclaimed the former, coming to a stop; "what's this? Fine arts exhibition. That ought to be something good, oughtn't it?"

"Good? no!" sneered Miffins. "Fine arts all humbug!"

"Walk in, gentlemen," said the Diddler, mellifluously; "admission only threepence to this splendid fine art show."

"Is it worth seeing?" asked Brownrigg.

"Finest sight in the fair," the Diddler said; "walk up—pay your money—and judge for yourself. Walk up, walk up."

"Come on, then," said Brownrigg; "mustn't miss that. I'll pay."

"Ha, ha, ha!" grinned Miffins, as he looked at the Diddler; "he's the finest sight. Did you ever see such a guy?"

"Owe you one for that, Miffins," muttered the Diddler to himself. "Seize you out presently."

But more visitors appearing, he consigned the receipts to his pocket, and prepared to describe the works of art.

In the meantime, Doctor Waddle had wiped and adjusted his spectacles, and was preparing himself for a great treat.

"Let us go by the programme, Puckle," he said, as he referred to a paper he had received at the door. "'Number one—Sweet Seventeen, by S. Ugar.'"

"Sugar!" mentally repeated Mr. Puckle.

"Charming subject," continued the doctor, with enthusiasm; "speaks for itself. Young girl in bloom of youth and beauty—eh, Puckle?"

"Ah, ye-es!" sighed the usher, who was of a sentimental turn.

Doctor Waddle directed his gaze to that part of the wall where a label numbered one, and bearing the title, appeared very plainly.

But he could discern no picture; nothing but a number of round white objects, such as might be seen in the window of a sweetstuff shop.

"Why, what are these?" he exclaimed, at length, in bewilderment, as he peered at them through his specs.

"Seventeen sugar-sticks, dear sir," explained the Diddler, without moving a muscle.

This elicited an instantaneous laugh from the crowd.

"Sugar-sticks!" echoed the astonished doctor.

"Yes," returned the Diddler. "If you can find a sweeter seventeen in whole fair—give leave to do so, and return your money."

Again the crowd laughed, to Doctor Waddle's great annoyance, but not wishing to show his displeasure, he said:

"Ah, well, looking at it in that light, possibly it may pass. Let us go on to number two—'Babes in the Wood, by D. Oily.'"

He looked for the picture, but saw nothing but a small box with two remarkably ugly penny dolls in it.

"There they are," said the Diddler, in a professional tone, as he pointed to the artistic production; "observe—mournful expression—infants' fears."

"Bah!" growled Miffins; "one of 'em squints."

"No wonder—no grub for a fortnight—enough to make anybody squint," was the Diddler's sharp retort.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Brownrigg; "that's good; eat my wig if it isn't."

"This isn't at all what I expected," murmured the doctor, as he passed on. "What is the next? 'Out for the Night, by E. Tinkler.'"

"That ought to be something good—eh, Puckle?" he whispered to the usher.

"Ye-es, certainly," responded that accommodating individual.

But to the dismay of Doctor Waddle, he looked upon a battered candlestick, surmounted by an equally battered extinguisher.

"Is this Out for the Night?" he asked, appealing to the Diddler.

"Quite out," responded the latter, with much suavity. "Beautiful design—true to nature—universally admired, et cetera. Go on to number four" he called, loudly.

"'View of Cork.'"

The doctor looked with all his eyes, and so did Mr. Puckle, and beheld only a bung.

"Oh, this really is too bad!" cried Doctor Waddle, out of patience. "Puckle, isn't it too bad?"

"Decidedly is—a— quite agree with you," stammered the usher.

"It's a dead swindle!" growled Miffins.

"A gross imposture!" cried Brownrigg.

The rest of the spectators seemed to entertain the same opinion; but the Diddler still stood his ground.

"All mistaken, really," he said, as he pointed to the bung. "Must be correct view of Cork—cork all over—nothing else. Am I right?"

"Let's go on to the next," cried a voice from the crowd. "I rather like this; it's good fun."

"Number five," continued the Diddler. "'Companions of the Bath,' by A. Drenching."

"Whear be it?" inquired a countryman. "I'll have a look at that first; here I come."

In reply, a small portion of the tent opened at the top, and a boy, who was stationed there with a watering-pot, began to sprinkle the company liberally.

"Drawing in water colors," remarked the Diddler, as seriously as a judge.

"It's taking the color out of my new dress!" shrieked an old lady. "Oh, it's too bad."

"Yes, ma'am, your dress is too bad to come out in; it is a very bad dress, really."

"Stop it!" shouted Miffins; "I've got on my best hat!"

"So have I!" joined in Brownrigg; "eat my wig if I haven't."

At a signal from the Diddler, the youth with the watering-pot disappeared, and to divert the attention of the visitors, the Diddler cried:

"Number six, contribution from the Sheepshanks collection; very fine!"

"Ah, Sheepshanks!" exclaimed Doctor Waddle. "I've heard of him. This must be good this time, Puckle; you've heard of Sheepshanks?"

Without waiting for the usher's reply he pressed forward, and his anxious eyes fell upon three—mutton bones.

"Look, gentlemen, these are admirably executed—true to life—very!" exclaimed the Diddler.

The lookers-on scarcely knew whether to laugh or to be angry. And during their pause of indecision the Diddler raised his voice again:

"Number seven—'Ruins of Ancient Greece, by Drippie.'"

In spite of his repeated disappointments, the doctor's enthusiasm revived at this classical title and the associations it recalled.

"We're going to see something good at last. I expect we shall have a treat at last," he exclaimed. "Ancient Greece, Puckle, eh!"

"Ancient Greece!" echoed the usher.

Once more Doctor Waddle looked eagerly through his specs.

But his enthusiasm died away at once. The relics consisted of nothing but a small end of a tallow candle.

"Oh, dear, dear, this is abominable!" cried the doctor; "we're being duped! Puckle, we're being made fools of!"

"Fools of—ye-es," murmured the wearied Puckle.

"Oh, dear, no—nothing of the sort, gentlemen," returned the Diddler, in his most cheerful and confident tone. "Old tallow—is ancient grease—fact—positive—no disputing."

But the spectators murmured, and seemed very much inclined to dispute, when the Diddler again shouted:

"Number eight—and last—'A Pair of Soles, by A. Fish.'"

Doctor Waddle had lost all interest in the exhibition, and when the rest of the audience caught sight of a pair of old boots as the concluding work of art, their pent-up indignation burst forth.

The doctor groaned, and dug the unfortunate Puckle in the ribs, and made him groan, too.

Miffins raved and demanded his money back.

So did his friend, and vowed he'd eat his wig if he didn't have it, every farthing.

The rest joined in, and the uproar and fun was tremendous.

But when the sightseers looked for the artistic gentleman in the black coat and skull-cap, he was nowhere to be seen.

"It's a confounded shame, robbing people in this way," growled Miffins, as he stamped about in a rage and thrust his hands savagely into his coat-tail pockets.

But suddenly he stopped and drew them out, with a lump of tallow sticking to the end of each finger.

The Diddler had quietly introduced some candle-ends into his coat-tails, and the heat had melted them, Brownrigg was in ecstasies.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!" he roared.

"Don't see anything to laugh at," said the discomfited Miffins.

"Can't help it, Miff; can't, really!" cried his friend, as he capered about in a perfect paroxysm of delight; eat my wig if I——"

But suddenly he, too, came to a stop, as something very unpleasant trickled down his forehead and nose of an uncommonly tallowy odor.

"Why, what the deuce is this?" he said, as he raised his hat, when down came a torrent of melted candle-grease—also placed there by the Diddler—over his head and face.

"Relics of ancient grease!" roared Miffins, rejoiced at the opportunity of retaliating.

The irritation caused by this incident was so great that it had all but terminated in a fight.

But the bystanders interfering, peace was at length restored.

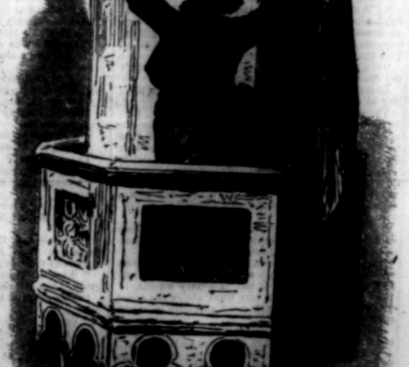
One could not now laugh at the other, and they consoled themselves by vowing deadly vengeance upon some one or other—they didn't know whom.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MOVING WAXWORKS—THE DIDDLER PLAYS A PRACTICAL JOKE, WHICH BRINGS ABOUT A VERY MOVING SCENE—A FREE FIGHT IN THE EXHIBITION—RESCUE OF PUCKLE AND DOCTOR WADDLE BY HIS DEVOTED PUPILS.

THE Diddler, in the meantime, had reached his other establishment, where the moving wax models anxiously awaited him.

TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—SCENES IN TRIPOLI. TRIPOLITAN LADY AND CHILD.—SEE PAGE 174



TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—SCENES IN TRIPOLI. A MUEZZIN CALLING TO PRAYER.

During his absence Tim Carroll, of the travelling theatre, had dressed them all up in what he declared was the correct costumes for the various characters they represented.

Tim was a true Irish boy, ripe for any fun, and he had entered into the Diddler's schemes with all his heart, and not only performed the office of costumer and perruquier, but volunteered further to be the interpreter of the wax figures.

He was quite in an ecstasy at the appearance they presented.

"Perfect pictures, ain't they?" he remarked to the Diddler, as he entered.

"Perfect—couldn't be better," was the latter's reply, as he ran his eye over them.

"No, bedad," chuckled Tim; "their own mother wouldn't know 'em."

"I think we look an awful lot of guys," remarked Dick Sanclif, rather ruefully.

"So do I," joined in Pickwick.

There was a good deal of truth in this remark, but the Diddler would not admit it.

"Nothing of the sort," he said, in a glowing tone; "look splendid—heroes of antiquity all guys—way they had."

And with this he, assisted by Tim, commenced putting on his own attire.

By this time there was a considerable crowd waiting outside.

"I say, governor," grinned the Irishman, as he peeped through a crevice in the door, "it's a crusher you're going to have, anyhow."

"I hope I ain't going to be crushed," said Swags, dolefully; "my dress is so awful tight I couldn't stand squeezing. I should go off with a pop; I know I should."

The rest of the wax models burst into a laugh at poor Swags, and at that moment the anxious sightseers without began to evince their impatience by kicking at the door.

"Public getting impatient," said the Diddler; "better take your places."

The models at once mounted up into the compartments which had been apportioned to them.

"Now, me darling," said Tim to them, "you all know your parts. Whatever I say you're doin', you're to do."

The figures nodded.

"When you hear the bell jingle you'll put yourselves in position," continued Tim. "Don't forgit you're waxworks an' moved by machinery, an' pay partickler attention to the action of yer arms, an' the way ye rolls yer eyes.

The models grinned and nodded again in response, and Tim then drew the curtains until the moment for the exhibition to commence should arrive.

The knocking on the outside increased, for the people were getting impatient, and threatened to pull the place down if not admitted.

The Diddler, who had thrown a Turkish gabardine and turban over his dress, at once opened the door, and proceeded to take the sixpences that flowed in a silver shower.

The first rush was over, when, to his great delight, he saw Doctor Waddle and his usher approaching.

The doctor had recovered the disappointment at the fine arts, and now stopped before the waxwork emporium and read the announcement.

"Um!" he said, reflectively; "the other exhibition was not much. I wonder what this is like? Puckle, what is your opinion?"

"Well, if I may venture a remark," said the deferential Puckle, who had just had a bottle of beer, and was somewhat exhilarated in consequence, "as we were swindled in the former case, I think it very possible we may be *done browns* here."

Doctor Waddle, who regarded punning as a liberty, looked amazed.

"That's an atrocious joke of yours, Puckle," he said, sharply; "and allow me to remark, rather a vulgar one. Abstain from such in future, I beg."

"Pardon me, my dear sir," pleaded the crushed Puckle; "the atrocity was suggested by the proprietor's name."

He pointed, as he spoke, to the announcement, which the doctor read deliberately.

"Dunn Brown!" he muttered to himself; "umph! that looks ominous, certainly. But we'll go in and judge, at all events."

They entered, and the "turbaned Turk" took their sixpences with a bland smile.

They were closely followed by Miffins, about whom the odors of "ancient grease" still lingered. But they had arranged their differences, and seemed to have quite recovered their tempers.

The Diddler received their coins with his usual urbanity, and the exhibition being now full, he closed the door, and going round, slipped in a private entrance behind the drapery.

The light within the show was very much subdued, and so arranged that it should fall upon the wax models, which were at present concealed by the curtains.

There was altogether an air of gloom and mystery about the interior that looked promising, and Miffins said, confidentially:

"We shall see something here."

Doctor Waddle was also very favorably impressed.

"I like the look of this place," he said, in a subdued tone; "if you remark, Puckle, there is a diminutiveness pervading the circumambient atmosphere, imparting to it a kind of solemn a—a sort of a——. You know what I mean, Puckle."

"Oh, perfectly," responded the usher, who hadn't the remotest conception; "quite so!"

Everything being ready, at this juncture the tinkling of a bell was heard.

Then followed a click—click—click—click, performed by the Diddler behind the drapery upon a watchman's rattle, but which Tim Carroll took care to explain was the machinery which set the wax figures in motion being wound up.

A murmur of suppressed excitement passed through the crowd, which increased considerably when Tim, who was attired in a long black gown, with a dark fez on his head, and a beard to match, called out:

"To' first group, ladies an' gintlemen, to which I'll have the honor ov callin' your attintion, is Samson carryin' away the gates of Gaza."

The curtain was drawn aside, discovering Dick Sanclif in a short tunic and bare limbs, bending down under an enormous but imaginary weight.

As the light fell upon him from above the effect was striking, and elicited some applause from the spectators.

"That is not bad, by any means," remarked Doctor Waddle; "but I fancy the costume is too modern for the early period at which the strong man lived. Is it not too modern, Puckle?"

"Ye—es, sir," stammered the latter; "as you say, I really—a—think—fancy——"

The doctor shut him up abruptly.

"Pshaw! you are never decided upon anything!" he snapped.

And then, in a whisper, he said to Tim:

"Young man, did Samson usually wear a Scotch dress?"

"Och, no, yer honor's rivirence," responded Tim, confidentially, not taken aback in the slightest; "shure the divvers Samson ought to a worn's gone to the wash, an' we slipped Rob Roy's suit on him just for th' present, till his own togs come home."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said the schoolmaster.

"Shure, this, doothor, it's the identical fact; but please don't say a word. The ignoramuses here won't know the difference if you don't tell 'em."

Doctor Waddle, flattered by the respectful tone of the exhibitor, and not wishing to create a confusion, kept silent.

But there was some amongst the throng less considerate.

And presently a voice—it was Miffins's—called out:

"Where's the gates of Gaza?"

Tim had entirely forgotten these necessary adjuncts until the moment; but ready wit came to him, and he replied, readily:

"Sure, they're atop ov th' hill where Samson's just been puttin' 'em. Where should they be?"

"On his back," cried one of the audience.

The rest laughed, and Tim, in order to divert their attention, continued:

"Observe the expansion of the strong man's muscles; notice how his eyes are startin' from the sockets, an' how red he's gettin' in the face."

The visitors looked intently, but none of these signs followed.

In vain the watchman's rattle click—clicked—in order to prove the machinery was at work.

It took no effect upon Dick Sanclif, who remained motionless as a statue.

The strain was too, a button which fastened Dick's kilt had come off, and he was afraid to stir, or even to breathe, lest it should drop off altogether.

But this catastrophe was known to no one but himself, and presently Miffins, who was tired of waiting, shouted:

"Sampson doesn't move."

But Tim, equal to the emergency, retorted:

"Bad luck to yez! How can you expect it ov th' poor divil afther the weight he's just bin' carryin'? Sure, it's out of all rason. He's taking a rest after his hard work."

Upon the laugh that followed this, the curtain closed, and the next was drawn aside, disclosing Bob Fairfit in a long, crimson robe, with flowing wig and beard, and a gilt circlet round his brows, seated in a mournful position.

"Daniel in the lion's den," explained Tim Carroll.

"Observe th' unfort'nit prisoner. Notice th' heavin' of his breast, and how he glances anxiously from side to side at the rav'nous beasts that surround him."

Bob certainly turned his eyes about in a manner quite striking to witness.

But even this, satisfactory as it was, was not quite sufficient, and a rustic visitor inquired, innocently:

"Where be the lions? Oi doan't see nout o' they."

"Ov course not," responded Tim; "bekase they're crouchin' behind the rocks. But you can hear the monsters if you listen."

Every one listened, and a low growl produced by the Diddler through a speaking trumpet thrilled the marrows of the entire audience.

In the midst of a general shudder the curtains closed.

"That was very good!" said Doctor Waddle; "the roar of the lion was very terrible; wasn't it, Puckle?"

"Very beautiful, indeed," responded Mr. Puckle, whose mind wandered.

"I said terrible, sir!" snapped the doctor, fiercely; "you're dreaming."

Before Puckle had time to reply Tim's voice was heard, as he cried:

"The next group will be the renowned knight, Sir John Falstaff, and his companions, Bardolph and Pistol.

The curtains drew aside and revealed Swags, Tinkie and Sanclif in these characters.

The fat boy looked Falstaff admirably, and his two comrades being well made up, the tableau was altogether effective, and elicited applause.

"Excellent!" exclaimed Doctor Waddle; "but, dear me, Puckle, doesn't it strike you that Falstaff is uncommonly like that fat boy, Swags?"

"Well, really, now you mention it, there is a—certainly—a strong resemblance," Mr. Puckle admitted.

The exhibitor continued:

"Observe the knight raise his hand in token of reproof."

Swags, who was fast asleep and dreaming of ginger-nuts, didn't move even so much as a finger-nail.

"Why, 'e beat's stirrin' at all!" cried a yokel in the crowd.

"Slight hitch in the machinery," called out a voice from behind; "set right instantly."

Immediately the Diddler's hand protruded from the drapery, and performed some slight operation upon the back of the figure.

This was simply the insertion of a large blanket-pin in Falstaff's hindquarters.

The effect was electrical, and the stout knight woke up with a loud "O—h!" and gazed stupidly around him.

"Eh, 'e do move now!" exclaimed the countryman who had previously spoken.

"An' speak, too," added one of his companions.

Tinkie, hearing these remarks, whispered to Swags:

"Remember where you are!"

"All right!" Swags replied; "I'm awake now."

The machinery having been thus restored to working order, Tim resumed his description.

"Observe, the knight raises his hand in token of reproof."

Swags performed this act, and continued to perform it until his thumb touched his nose, where it stopped.

Bardolph and Pistol imitated their leader, and there the three stood with their thumbs to their noses and their fingers extended.

"Why, they be takin' sights at one another," grinned the astonished rustics.

"Very singular indeed!" murmured Doctor Waddle.

"Very!" echoed Mr. Puckle.

"You'll all please to observe the nat'ral motion of the figures," continued Tim, as the characters turned slowly, as on a pivot, till they faced the audience.

There slowly as before they raised their other hands until the thumbs of the left touched the little fingers of the right.

By a strange coincidence, too, the figures fixed their eyes upon Doctor Waddle and Mr. Puckle, and at once commenced moving their fingers at them, as though playing upon imaginary penny whistles for their express edification.

This tickled the audience so immensely that they roared again with laughter.

"Is this intended as an insult, Puckle, or what?" whispered the doctor, growing very red in the face.

"Well, I really—a—it does seem something like it, certainly," Puckle gasped.

"Very much, indeed, I think," said the preceptor.

But before he could express an opinion, a loud crash was heard, and Falstaff, Bardolph, and Pistol suddenly disappeared through the floor, which had given way beneath the fat boy's weight.

The audience—especially the rustic portion—who regarded this as a part of the performance, laughed and cheered lustily.

In the midst of this *furore* the curtains closed and Tim called out:

"The next group consists of the Zulu king and his favorite wife, Hoggee Muggee."

The drapery drew aside, and two of the boys appeared in a couple of demoniac dresses and equally demoniac masks.

"Dear me, what a dreadful female!" exclaimed Doctor Waddle. "How would you like a wife like that—eh, Puckle?"

Puckle winced at the excruciating idea, and the curtains quickly shut in the disagreeable objects.

"The next," shouted the exhibitor, "is a picture of modern life. Three schoolboys at their studies."

This interesting group consisted of young Pickwick, Bob Fairfit, and the Hon. Jonadab Fitzsham, dressed in their usual attire, and seated in various studious attitudes.

Doctor Waddle for a moment gazed at them with open eyes and mouth, and then uttered a vehement exclamation.

"Why, Puckle! Puckle!" he cried, excitedly; "they're three of my own boys. Where—how did you become possessed of those a—a wax figures?"

"Sure, thin, yer honor," Tim replied, with a strong dash of the blarney in his tones, "they're correct likenesses taken from photos of three young gintlemen as belongs to the scholastic establishment ov the renowned Doctor Waddle, who bates all other instructors holler in his ability to tache the young idea how to shoot."

The doctor calmed down at once.

"Ah!" he said, "the likenesses are truly wonderful, Puckle; really lifelike."

"Quite so," admitted the usher, his eyes almost out of his head with astonishment.

The wax models, who heard these comments, made the most extraordinary grimaces in their efforts to control their inclination to laugh.

"See, see! They're convulsed!" cried Doctor Waddle, seriously; "strange! very strange!"

"Very!" echoed Puckle; "never knew until now that wax was subject to convulsions."

This was too much for the figures, and with a violent explosion of laughter, they rolled helplessly off their pedestals, and vanished behind the drapery in the background.

Without allowing time for reflection, Tim called out:

"Now, ladies and gintlemen, prepare for th' last an' most wondtherful sight of the intire exhibition. Hercules, the desthroyer of the seven-headed hydra."

(To be continued.)

"Young Pickwick's Schooldays" was commenced in No. 68.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

SKETCHES IN TRIPOLI.

ALL the dependencies of Turkey may, in the event of the Sultan declaring a holy war, be called upon to furnish troops, and thus come prominently before the public. Some of these have, as it were, fallen out of sight. Take our old antagonist, Tripoli, whom our Republic, in its childhood, sent Preble and Decatur to punish, and where an American general, Eaton, played such a conspicuous part in attempting to unseat one Bey in favor of another.

Those were the days when a family had managed to make the office of Dey hereditary, and allegiance to Turkey was more nominal than real. When this family died out, Turkey, by the influence of Great Britain, recovered the real power, and since then the Beys are Turkish officers appointed from Constantinople. This will, of course, make the answer to a call for troops prompt and certain. The province, or Vilayet of Tarabul, as the natives call it, extends from Egypt to Tunis, including the desert district of Barca, and stretches inland from the Mediterranean to the same limit, and is France as a dependency. The population of the whole country is from half a million to three-quarters.

The climate is hot in June, July and August, but the heat is always tempered by sea-breezes. The city of Tripoli, shown in our engraving, has a population of from ten to twenty thousand, three thousand being Christians and four thousand Jews. Our view is taken from the land side, and the harbor is seen with ships at anchor. In the foreground are shapeless negro huts. The Kasbah, or Bey's residence, an immense, irregular building, is seen near the minarets. The city contains six handsome mosques, the great one with a curious roof of small cupolas, supported by sixteen marble columns. There are several Christian churches, a Franciscan convent, a number of synagogues, and in and near the city many curious old tombs.

Among the types to be seen in the streets, our artist sketches several: Abu Aly, a marabout, greatly revered by the Mohammedans for his sanctity, the test of which seems to be his unlimited abuse of all Christians and Jews whom he meets, and an exceptional ability in swallowing stones and bits of glass. He is greatly esteemed, and every Mohammedan house gladly welcomes him to a well-spread table. He usually parades the street with a flag and a horse-tail. Abu Seadia, the juggler, with his balls and castanets, is another well-known street character, amusing the crowds by his performances. The muezzin here, as in other Mohammedan cities, is seen and heard, as, high in air, he calls men to prayer.

The Tripolitan ladies adhere still to the old dress, muffled and veiled. They never can be prevailed upon to sit for portraits or photographs. This lady, with her bright boy, was happily unconscious of the lame she was to acquire.

The Jewess and her daughters are not so chary of displaying their countenances. The mother is laden down with gold coins to the value of hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars; the elder daughter similarly overloaded with jewelry and tinsel.

SECOND SIGHT,

AS PRACTISED BY ROBERT HELLER, EXPLAINED.

IF you want Kentucky named thus, the question: "Pray name the State."

"Quick."

"Pray" is K and Q is Y. After the alphabet we have the numbers, which, it will be seen, are easily understood after a little practice.

For No. 1—The words used are Say or Speak.
For No. 2—Be, Look or Let.
For No. 3—Can or Can't.
For No. 4—Do or Don't.
For No. 5—Will or Won't.
For No. 6—What.
For No. 7—Please or Pray.
For No. 8—Are or Ain't.
For No. 9—Now.
For No. 10—Tell.
For No. 0—Hurry or Come.

"Well," means to repeat the last figure. Example: The number 1,234 is required; attention must only be paid to the first words of a sentence, thus: "Say the number."

"Look at it."
"Can you see it?"
"Do you know?"
Or say the number is 100.
"Tell me the number."
"Hurry."

A rather difficult number would be 1,111. The question would be put in this wise:

"Say the number."
"Well."
"Speak out."
"Say what it is."

On a watch or a greenback there are sometimes eight or nine numbers, which can be followed as easily as the above. There are eight colors, which will comprise the list as they are set forth in the table, and the solution of the numbers, as I have explained, will furnish the key. For example, the article presented is green, the question will be:

"What is the color?"

—green being the sixth color in the list. Blue is wanted, and as it stands third in the list, the word would be:

"Can you tell the color?"

White is wanted, and as it stands first in the list, the question is:

"Say the color."

Understand that the words explaining the numbers, as given in the list, are applied to the articles enumerated in each of the subjoined tables. Take the metals, for instance. The metal presented is copper, which is fourth in the list. The question would be:

"Do you know the metal?" Or steel, which is ninth in the list.

"Now, what is the metal?"

To be continued.)

SOME INTERESTING DATES.

DATES are generally *dry* reading, but there is sometimes a significance in the mere grouping of dates, and the reader will find significance in an attentive consideration of the following events, all occurring, he will observe, within the limit of a little over a century:

Post-offices were established in 1464; printed musical notes were first used in 1473; watches were first constructed in 1476; America was discovered in 1492; Copernicus announced his discovery of the true system of the universe in 1517; Albert Durer gave the world a prophecy of future wood engravings in 1527; Jergens set the spinning-wheel in motion in 1530, the germ of all the spinning-wheels and looms of ten thousand future factories; modern needles first came into use in 1545; the first knives were used in England, and the first wheeled carriages in France, in 1559; the first newspaper was published in England in 1588; telescopes were invented in 1590; Spencer, Shakespeare, Bacon, Tycho Brahe were contemporaries in 1590. These are some of the more important headlands of European history within a single century.

TWO MORE GOOD STORIES—BOTH ABOUT BOYS.

A FRIEND and neighbor has a son who is so quick at repartee that it is a little dangerous to cross swords with him. He was out riding with his father the other day, when, noting the width of a street, he asked if it was named for Mr. B——, a well-known but not altogether popular citizen.

"By no means," said the father; "it was not named for him, but for his father, who was very popular and very much esteemed."

The boy said nothing; so his father, who thought he saw a chance to preach a little sermon, continued:

"It's very apt to be so. A boy has a father whom everybody loves and respects for his good qualities and abilities, but in too many cases the boy doesn't amount to anything."

Said the boy, after a pause:

"Your father was very much esteemed, wasn't he, sir?"

A STORY comes to Causeur of an incident in a school in Southampton, England, some years since. The boys were being examined in the history of England, and the answers were mainly dates of events more or less important in the history of the British Empire. Among the pupils was the son of a well-known sea-captain, a bright specimen of young America. Being questioned concerning dates in English history, he manifested an ignorance bordering on stupidity. The teacher, whose patience was exhausted, exclaimed: "What! Don't you remember a single date that marks an important event in the history of England?" "Way, yes, sir," answered the boy, "I do know one." "Well, out with it," said the teacher. "*The Fourth of July, 1776.*" There was a decided sensation.

A BRAVE BOY.—When the Zulus rushed in on the small British detachment of Colonel Wood's, and while there yet was an open road in one direction, Colonel Weatherly, an English cavalry officer, stopped his gun, a boy thirteen years old, with him, on horseback, kissed him, and told him to fly for life. The lad jumped from his saddle, striking the horse a lash which sent it off, and said: "Father, I'll die with you." The father handed his revolver to the child just as the Zulus reached, over British bodies, the spot where they stood. Weatherly slew five Zulus before he fell, but the son was killed at once.

MRS. UTT'S FIGHT WITH AN EAGLE.

A RECENT letter from Honesdale, Pa., to the New York *Sun*, says: "Parts of Preston township, thirty miles from this place, are yet as wild as they were when the Indians inhabited the region. Some of the highest elevations in Pennsylvania are in Preston. These are rocky peaks, abounding in deep ravines and caverns. In this wild territory there are seventeen large lakes, some of them on the very crests of the mountains, more than two thousand feet above the sea. These lakes are full of fish, and are favorite resorts of enormous fish-hawks, which find abundant fish in the bass, pickerel and perch they catch. There are also many eagles, and they subsist by robbing the hawks when they rise laden with fish from the lakes. The inaccessible crags and ravines afford them secure resting and hatching-places, and here eagles still rear their young. Specimens measuring over seven feet from tip to tip have been shot near the lakes. Fishermen often see fierce battles between the hawk and the eagle, and often both eagle and hawk are brought down by the sportsman's rifle. At times the eagles extend their foraging expeditions to the farming country south and north of the wilderness. In the Spring they annoy the farmers, for they sweep down boldly upon the sheep-pastures and carry off lambs and poultry.

"A farmer named Utt, who lives near one of the lakes in Preston township, has a two-year-old game-cock that was presented to his wife, and she has taken a liking to the fowl. One day, while her husband was absent in Deposit, Mrs. Utt heard a commotion among the chickens in the barnyard, and, on running out, found her game rooster gallantly fighting with what she supposed was a very large hawk, which was trying to fasten its talons in the chicken. The two birds were so deeply engaged in the combat that Mrs. Utt's shouts did not frighten the enemy away. She picked up a stick and ran into the barnyard and struck the intruder. This did not apparently alarm it. Then she seized it by the neck with both hands, and for the first time saw it was an eagle. The powerful bird buried its claws deep in Mrs. Utt's arm. She did not dare let go her hold, although the eagle was tearing her flesh dreadfully. She tightened her grasp on its throat, and then threw herself heavily to the ground upon it. In this way she kept it down, and choked it to death. The flesh of Mrs. Utt's arm was torn to the bone in places. The eagle measured nearly five feet from tip to tip."

POSTAGE PORTRAITS.

THE following "outing" is of interest: "The United States postage-stamps bear various profile portraits. The portrait of Benjamin Franklin on the one-cent stamp, in imperial ultramarine-blue, is after a profile bust by Rubricht. The head of Andrew Jackson on the two-cent stamp, in velvet brown, is from a bust by Hiram Powers. The Washington head on the green three-cent stamp is after Houdon's celebrated bust. The Lincoln profile, in red, on the six-cent stamp, is after a bust by Volk. The seven-cent stamp, in vermilion, gives the head of Stanton, after a photograph. The head of Jefferson on the ten-cent stamp, in chocolate, is drawn from a life-size statue by Hiram Powers. The portrait of Henry Clay, in neutral purple, on the twelve-cent stamp, is after a bust by Hart. The head of Webster, on the fifteen-cent stamp, is orange, is after the Clevenger bust. The portrait of General Scott on the twenty-four-cent stamp, in purple, is after a bust by Coffee. The head of Hamilton on the thirty-cent stamp, in black, is after the Ceracchi bust, and the portrait of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, in carmine, is after Wolcott's statue.

It is alleged that firearms, in the shape of cannon, were first employed by Edward III., King of England, in 1327, in his campaign against the Scots. The first well authenticated use of cannon in battle was by Edward III. in the battle of Cressy, A. D. 1346.

Of all virtues magnanimity is the rarest. There are a hundred persons for one who willingly accepts wrongs than for one who willingly accepts kindnesses; it is another. When a man misses anything his first idea is that somebody has stolen it, though he ascertains ninety-nine times in a hundred that the loss is from his own carelessness.

A STARTLED SMOKER.—A Baltimore smoker was thrown into a scare one night last week. He was smoking a clay-pipe, in order to quiet his nerves before going to bed. Suddenly his pipe exploded in his mouth and was shattered to stems. A good-sized cartridge had been left in the tobacco-drawer.

A SOLUTION of nitrate or chloride of cobalt, or chloride of copper, mixed with a little gum or sugar, produces a 'secret ink,' which is made visible by warming, either by holding against the stove or over a burning match. Potassium ferrocyanide in solution may also be used, but this requires a developer, for which either copper or iron-mephate may be employed. With the former the writing will appear in brown, and with the latter in blue color. This kind of ink may be used to advantage for messages which are sent on postal-cards, or otherwise unsealed.

[The following curious bit of versification was regarded half a century ago as the only perfect and the most ingenious specimen of alliteration then extant. It is comparatively unknown nowadays.]

An Austrian army awfully arrayed
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade.
Cossack commanders cannonading come,
Dealing destruction's devastating doom.
Every endeavor engineers essay
For fame, for fortune, fighting furious fray.
Generals 'gainst generals grapple—gracious good!
How honors heaven heroic hardihood!
Infuriate, indiscriminate in ill,
Kindred kill kinsmen, kinsmen kindred kill.
Labor low levels longest, loftiest lines,
Men march 'mid mounds, 'mid moans, 'mid murderous mines.
Now noisy, noxious numbers notice naught
Of outward obstacles opposing ought;
Poor patriots, partly purchased, partly pressed,
Quite quaking quickly quarter, quarter quest.
Reason returns, religion's rights redounds,
Suwarrow stops such sanguinary sounds.
Truce to thee, Turkey, triumph to thy train
Unwise, unjust, unmerciful Ukraine.
Why wish we warfare? Wherefore—some were
Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xavier?
Yield! yield, ye youths, ye yeomen, wield your yen.
Zerra's, Zopater's, Zoroaster's zeal
Attracting all, arts against arms appeal.

THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowance being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. B.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 673.

1. Scholar, Shelves, Library—SiSaL, CHI, HorsEcrall, OgLeR, LiVIA, AmEeR, RuStY. 2. Cashmere. 3. May-flower. 4. Essex. Scare. Sapor, Erode, Xerxes. 5. Vote, Over, Tess, Erse. 6. S, Ute, Ursia, Grumbie, Elbow, Alw, E. 7. Content. 8. Tape, Taper, Tap. 9. Car-pet. 10. Bramble, Rambie, Amble, Blame, Lame, Male, Ale.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 673.

1.—N. L. Sequin, 1425 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

2.—A. W. Quin, Box 2240, New Orleans, La.

3.—E. A. Deckbar, 60 Harmony Street, New Orleans, La.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—METAGRAM.

THE shades of night are drawing fast,
The sun is set, the day is past;
Come, draw the curtains, and at last
Sit down together.
My first will give a pleasant light,
Soothing and gentle to the sight;
We'll stir the fire to blaze so bright,
This chilly weather.

Now change my head, and if my bed
Should be my next, lever I'd dread,
For such a thing has often bred
Ague and gout;
Change head again, and soldiers this,
And though some think it not amiss,
I call it not a state of bliss.
Come, find me out.

2.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

By statesman, editor and poet, we are, no doubt, both used;
While by all those who us possess we are sometimes abused.

A part of the foot, to be slender and tall;
Behold her, mourning o'er her children small;
A hot place felt in Egypt, which from the south does come;
A vibratory motion, enjoyed and liked by some;
In Africa, a country, way in the north, I weed;
A mountain very high, in truth, in this is clearly seen;
A gentle push or shove, received sometimes by you;
If here you reach, without success, be sure this not to do.

3.—FOURTEEN BURIED POETS.

From kraal and bush against our camp belligerent dark waves came,
Through lager loop opens on them answering tongues of flame;
Behold how they destroy and burn, sparks ascend on high,
Oh, odoriferous clime to you I bid a long—ay, a long good-by.
Rondeau work of ancient bards, to you the lines belong,
Fellowship in classic lore, words worthy sweetest song;
Come hither, Bertha, darling, let sweet harmony awake
The bereavement of fair Helen caused Troy's walls to shake.
Spearmen with lance in rest, urge on their gallant steeds
O'er heath-clad moor, each squadron charge wherever honor leads;
From yonder lake at sunset, the peaceful fisher lands,
Received with joy by dear ones, where yet his cottage stands.

4.—CHARADE.

A mat you will find as my first, if inclined;
A proposition my next will appear;
My third is trouble, and if your efforts you double,
A punishment, my whole'll be clear.

5.—ENIGMA.

Look in the papers, I'm sure to appear;
Look in the oven, perhaps I'm there;
Sometimes I assist in promoting a flame,
Sometimes I extinguish. Now, reader, my name?

6.—ENIGMA.

One stormy night behold a swimmer brave
To meet his love plunges boldly in the wave;
Yet, though so stormy and so late,
Across the strip of sea
A maid his coming doth await,
And watching stands. Ah me,
No more, no more she'll see his face!
The waves, with cruel grasp,
Have taken him in their embrace,
Instead of her warm clasp.
Then wildly cries along the maiden fair;
What Bow'r might she have roamed in her despair?

7.—CHARADE.

My first receives but never tells
The secret of a friend;
My second does upon my first
For its success depend.
My whole with pain the fair admit,
Yet gladly to receive it sit;
And whilst they cringe with pain and fright,
They hail my entry with delight.

8.—ONEGRAM.

How sweet its ripple when earth's green with verdure,
And tinkling bells on breezes light are borne,
When, furry second, that same breeze hath stirred your
Wild prickly twigs and yellow flowers at morn!
Mark yonder thrush, her all-impatient third o'er,
She sees the worm she bore them piecemeal torn,
And eager bills, for further food distended,
Proclaim the morning meal is scarcely ended

9.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A letter; a fish; to coop up; spirits; empty and a vowel; little; a letter.

10.—SQUARE WORDS.

Beasts of burden that you oft see;
A delving instrument next will be;
A sword well wielded by some Murat bold;
A Saxon king who ruled in days of old;
Last 'neath the soil with anxious care we lay,
That fruit and flower may grace a later day.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

HEAD-QUARTERS.—A pillow.

A PAIR of drawers.—Two dentists.

THE whole thing in a nutshell.—The worm.

CHEESE is sometimes mightier than the sword.

MAN finds his "rock ahead in life" in the cradle.

IS a man careful of his provisions when he bolts his food?"

DRIVE your cattle on the ice if you want cowslips in the Winter.

BOYS take the rod with great meekness when fishing is good.

IT IS said that some carpenters do not believe there is any such thing as stone, because they never saw it.

A CYNICAL old bachelor says that when a talkative woman simply holds her tongue she thinks she is meditating.

WHY is beet sugar as good as cane sugar? Because the difference between beating and caning is merely nominal.

"MONEY is a great lever in the affairs of men," said a lecturer on finance. "Yes," exclaimed an auditor, "it's so great a leaver that some of us can never keep it."

FELT gray is a popular color for ladies' suits. Felt-blue is the popular color for the husbands who have to pay the bills.

"IT is the little bits ov things that fret and worry us," says Josh Billings; "we kan dodge an elephant, but we kan't a fly."

MRS. PARTINGTON says she was much elucidated last Sunday on hearing a fine discourse on the parody of the prodigious son.

"BRILLIANT and impulsive people," says an exchange, "have black eyes." Impulsive people are only too apt to get black eyes.

WHITTIER, who wrote about "The Man with the Branded Hand," is about to set to music "The Woman with the Brandied Peaches."

"WHAT'S honor?" asked Falstaff. That's easy. Any woman who sits behind another woman in church can tell what's on her in two minutes.

ONE of the saddest and most vexatious trials that come to a girl when she marries is that she has to discharge her mother and depend upon a servant.

"I AM astonished, my dear young lady, at your sentiments—you make me start!" "Well, sir, I've been waiting for you to start for the last hour."

WHEN you get in a car and hand all the money you have in your pocket, a trade-dollar, to the conductor, you don't feel good for a cent when he pronounces it counterfeit.

THE young lady whose lover wrote her that he was doing duty on the contest-field, afterward ascertained that instead of fighting Indians he drove a team for a circus.

A YOUNG lady was praising her beau one Monday morning for his strength of character. "Yes," said her father, grimly, "I have noticed he has great staying-powers."

"HOW DOES the new cow answer?" asked one man of another, who had lately purchased a cow. "I really can't say," was the reply, "for I have never asked her a question."

WE never tried to spin afore
A yarn which has been spun afore,
But when we pen on Pinafore,
It seems we've heard the pun afore.

"MADAM," said a portrait-painter, "your daughter is beautiful—she is a perfect little pearl." "And pray, sir, what am I?" "Oh," replied the painter, "you are, of course, the mother o' pearl."

FIERY BOY—"Where yer bin, Billy?" *Second Boy*—"Been fishin'." *First Boy*—"Ketch anythin'?" with an anxious expression on his face. *Perceiving Second Boy*—"No. But I expect ter when I git in the house."

PRACTICAL YANKEE.—"Well, yes, sir. I give in to you. Shakespeare was a genius. But he didn't seem to put it to a practical use. Never benefited civilization with a washing-machine, nor a patent turnip-peeler, nor anything of that sort. Still, he was a smart man."

A PRETTY girl "out West" told her beau that she was a "mind-reader." "You don't say so!" he exclaimed. "Can you read what's in my mind?" "Yes," said she, "you have it in your mind to ask me to be your wife, but you're just a little scared at the idea." Their wedding-cards are out.

A COUNTRYMAN, seating himself at a fashionable restaurant with the intention of taking a hearty dinner, summoned a waiter and made known his purpose. The latter skipped briskly away, and finally returned with a handsomely bound bill of fare, which he opened and placed before the guest, who, pushing it away, scornfully observed: "Oh, come now, you can't cram no literature down me; vittals is what I want—vittals—and purty derned quick, too!"

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FIGHT BETWEEN ALLIGATORS AND A MONKEY.

EARLY one morning a desperate struggle took place, at a bird-store in New York, between two young alligators and a trained monkey, which the proprietor had left running free about the premises. The two alligators were kept in a tin tub covered with a perforated lid.

The proprietor fed them at seven o'clock, and then stepped out for a moment, leaving his baby seated on a chair. When he re-entered the store he beheld a truly frightful spectacle. The monkey had undoubtedly taken off the lid of the tin tub and upset it. The young alligators had at once attacked him, and one of them had terribly lacerated him. Meanwhile, the child, with a horrified air, sat on its high chair. The proprietor hesitated a moment, and then, seizing a heavy iron bar, dealt the two alligators several stunning blows. One of them died almost immediately afterward. The other, which still held the bleeding, screaming monkey in its formidable mouth, was only stunned, and the proprietor had to shoot it in the eye in order to kill it. The monkey died ten minutes afterward. It was almost a miracle that the child was saved from frightful mutilation. The joy of its mother and grandmother at finding it alive and unhurt, when they rushed into the store, can be better imagined than described.

TOBACCO.

TOBACCO first became known to Europe shortly after the discovery of America. The natives came forth against the Spaniards at Paraguay, three hundred and sixty years ago, "beating drums, throwing water, chewing tobacco, and squirting the juice!" Oviedo speaks of the natives smoking, setting fire to the dried leaves of tobacco, and inhaling the smoke through a hollow-forked stick, of which the forks were placed in the nostrils, and the other end held over the burning mass. Columbus also observed the smoking habits of the natives, and the chaplain who attended Cortez, tells us that King Montezuma had his pipe brought to him after he had dined, and washed his mouth with scented water.

Candem says, in his "Elizabeth," that Sir Francis Drake and his companions, on their return from Virginia in 1585, were the first, as far as he knew, who "introduced the Indian plant, called tabacca, or nicotia, into England, having been taught by the Indians to use it as a remedy against indigestion. "And from the time of their return," says he, "it immediately began to grow into very general use, and to bear a high price; a great many persons—some for luxury and others for their health—being wont to draw in the strong-smelling smoke with insatiable greediness through an earthenware tube, and then to puff it forth again through their nostrils; so that tobacco taverns are now as generally kept in all our towns as wine-houses or beer-shops. But whoever introduced tobacco into England found his speculation successful. People of fortune had pipes of silver—people of no fortune had 'a walnut-shell and a straw'; but people of whatever fortune smoked and 'culled their newest and best shilling to weigh in the scale against tobacco.' The new art of smoking engaged the attention of the men about town who were deep in the mysteries of the 'whiffle,' the 'Cuban ebullition,' etc., etc. The doctors seized on the new plant, praised its curative powers, and added it to the pharmacopœia. It was the holy herb, the southern panacea; the herb fit for all diseases. Poets praised it, bestowed on it the highest eulogiums, the most fantastical names, and ascribed to it innumerable virtues."

The opponents of tobacco were found among priests, princes, and physicians. Pope Urban excommunicated everybody who took snuff in church; Sultan Amurath made smoking a capital offence; cutting off the nose was the penalty denounced against smokers in Russia; in Switzerland it was a matter of prosecution. King James I. published a "Counterblast to Tobacco," and Cromwell declared that to grow tobacco in England was "thereby to corrupt and misemploy the soil of the kingdom"; his troops trampled down the crops wherever they could be found; and Sylvester, the poet, issued his "Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered," etc.—an essay more remarkable for its singular title than for its cogent reasoning. Poetry, or rhyme, has been written in immense quantities condemnatory of tobacco, and the poetasters are not particularly delicate in the language which they employ:

"Two smoky engines, in this latter age,
(Satan's short circuit, the more short his rage),
Have been invented!
Guns and tobacco-pipes, with fire and smoke,
At least a third part of mankind to choke,
(Which happily they Apocalypse foretold);
Yet of the two I think we may be bold
In some respects to think the last the worst."

There are no less than forty different species of tobacco described by botanists, all of which are now employed in different part of the world.

The *Herba Nicotiana*, or tobacco, belongs to the order *Monogynia*, and class *Pentandria*, of the botanists. Of the species most commonly in use are the *Nicotiana fruticosa*, or shrubby tobacco; the *Nicotiana tabacum*, or Virginian tobacco; and the *Nicotiana rusticum*, or common tobacco. The tobacco plant thrives in all temperate climates, but that produced in the tropics is the most esteemed, as possessing the finest flavor. The mode pursued by the aboriginal Indians in cultivating it cannot now be ascertained. The details of the present mode of cultivation differ in different climates, but the following general remarks may be applied to all:

The seeds are first raised in a bed, and from thence transplanted into a field. No pains ought to be spared in having the seedling bed thoroughly well prepared. Some planters are of opinion that in cold climates hot beds should be employed for the seeds, and that the quantity of manure should exceed that of earth; but this is generally admitted to be unnecessary. When the bed is properly prepared, the seeds must be sown either in rows or broadcast. Rows are generally preferred. The middle of April is the proper seed-time. An invariable rule, by which the time of the seedlings being ready for transplanting is ascertained, is "the fourth leaf being sprouted, and the fifth just ready to sprout."

The field intended for the reception of the seedlings must be carefully prepared, well trenched and dug up, well manured, and raised in a series of little hillocks, at the distance of about two feet from each other. These hillocks, which are meant to receive the plants, are hollowed out in the top, and a quantity of good manure laid in the cavity. When all is ready in the field, and the seedlings in a proper state of forwardness, they are transplanted—an operation which requires great care. A small quantity of earth is taken up along with the plant, and it is in this state placed in the cavity prepared for it, the earth being carefully pressed round the stalk by the hand. The field being planted, the next care is to keep it clear from weeds, to water the plants in dry weather, to lop off the dead leaves, and to keep the soil loose by constantly stirring it with the hoe.

After the plants have grown to a considerable size, it is necessary to cut off the flowers, in order to prevent a waste of nutriment and prevent the plant running to seed. This operation is called *topping*. The proper season for topping depends on the climate; in America, the number of leaves on the stalk—fifteen or sixteen—determines the matter. After the operation is performed, little sprouts will be constantly springing from the roots of the leaves, all of which must be carefully stopped off at their first appearance.

The particular time at which the plant may be said to be ripe also differs in different climates; but when ripe, the gatherer proceeds to the field on the first fine day, and laying hold of the plant near the top with one hand, he cuts it off with a large knife or ax with the other, as near the root as possible, and lays it carefully on the ground. The whole plants in the field being laid down, they are allowed to remain during the rest of the day exposed to the rays of the sun, and in the evening they will be found quite pliant and flexible. The plants are then removed into a large shed, and laid in heaps on the floor. When they have been in this situation about twenty-four hours, they begin to ferment; and while this operation is going on, they must be carefully shifted; those on the top of the heap being put in the centre, and those in the centre on the top. The process of fermentation may usually be allowed to continue three or four days, after which the plants may be taken in pairs, and tied together at the roots, or have a peg run through their stalks close to the bottom, and be suspended in this way, with their leaves hanging down, with plenty of room between each pair, upon a cross-beam in the same shed.

After the leaves are thoroughly dried—which usually takes about a month—the plants may be taken down. When down they are again laid in heaps, and pressed together by large logs of wood. Fermentation will again commence, and may be allowed to continue about a week. Great care must be taken, however, to prevent the heat from becoming too great, and, in order to do this, the person in attendance must constantly keep inserting his hand into the heap. When the heat exceeds glowing warmth, it may be considered too powerful, and must be reduced by the removal of some of the wood. This second fermenting process, which, in technical language, is termed "the second sweating," is sometimes omitted, but is generally recommended. It is allowed to continue about a week, after which the plants are separated and the leaves stripped off, and tied together in bundles or *hands*. This is the last operation performed by the planter, who sells the tobacco in "hands" to the manufacturers.

Upward of two million tons of tobacco are grown annually in America, and consumed in the world; this, at the low rate of five cents per pound, would equal in value the entire wheat crop of the United States. The duties on its importation into Great Britain amount to about twenty-five million dollars per annum, and no less than forty millions are annually, on an average, spent there on tobacco. France derives even a greater revenue from this same source. The City of Vienna alone consumes annually about 50,000,000 cigars, and the consumption in Great Britain amounts to more than five dollars per head, annually, for the population.

Both mechanical and manual labor—chiefly the latter—are employed in the manufacture of the tobacco-leaf into the different articles—tobacco for smoking, cigars, and snuff. Snuff is only tobacco ground to a very fine powder, the different qualities depending on its preparation, as well as on the material of which it is formed. The varieties, as everybody knows, are very great, extending from the common brown rappee to the high-dried Welch, etc. Snuff was first introduced into Europe at the French Court, in the reign of Henry III. It was called *Herbe à la reine*, Catherine de Medicis having a remarkable partiality for it. Cigars are manufactured by rolling the tobacco-leaf into the form required generally by hand. Cheroots are made in large quantities in Manilla, the principal island of the Philippines. Women there and elsewhere are employed largely in their manufacture.

FIGHT BETWEEN ALLIGATORS AND A MONKEY.

TOSSING COINS.

AT a time when pitching pennies was practiced by some older than schoolboys, tossing-pennies were in great demand. These were pennies with two heads or tails, with which, of course, the owner always won. "Tossing" coins are produced in every mint in the world. They are, however, made by accident, and ought to be relegated at once to the furnace. Occasionally, through inadvertence on the part of the workpeople, they escape with ordinary coins and reach the hands of the public; or they are abstracted from the factory by petty larceny. It would require much detail to explain exactly how double-headed and double-tailed coins of every denomination come sometimes into existence in the rapid striking of money at the mint. They are simply the result of occasional slips in the action of the machinery, and are known in the language of the mint as "brockages" or "wasters." Similar coins were sometimes made for sale from two good coins reduced and brazed together, but we question whether they are often now manufactured. Those branded "tossing" pennies were sold in England at from one shilling to two shillings and sixpence each, according to artistic merit.

LEARN to hold thy tongue. Five words cost Zacharias forty weeks' silence.